

The object of this publication, produced by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, is to educate, enlighten and inform its readers on religious, social, economic and political issues with particular emphasis on Islam.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Chairman: Rafiq Hayat

Fareed Ahmad, Basit Ahmad,
Fazal Ahmad, Mansoor Saqi,
Bockarie Tommy Kallon, Sarah
Waseem, Fauzia Bajwa,
Navida Shahid, Mahmood Hanif,
Tanveer Khokhar,
Mansoor Hyder-Muneeb,
Saleem Ahmad Malik.

Chairman of the Management Board: Naseer Qamar

Special Contributor: Amatul-Hadi Ahmad

Design and Typesetting Tanveer Khokhar Shaukia Mir

Publisher Al Shirkatul Islamiyyah

Distribution Muhammad Hanif, Amatul M. Chaudry, M.D. Shams

Views expressed in this
publication are not necessarily
the views of the Ahmadiyya
Muslim Community

All correspondence should be
forwarded directly to:

The Editor
Review of Religions
The London Mosque
16 Gressenhall Road
London, SW18 5QL
United Kingdom

© Islamic Publications. 2000

ISSN No. 0034-6721

CONTENTS — April 2001, Vol.96, No.4

Editorial 2

Comment 3

Fazal Ahmad – UK

Islam – A Religion of Peace..... 5

Abdul Ghany Jahangeer Khan – UK

The Reality of Paradise 15

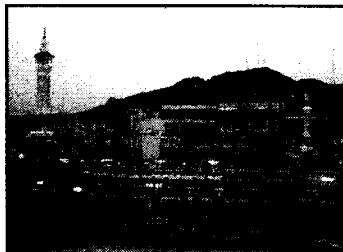
Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)

**Biblical Prophecy about the
Holy Prophet^(sa)– Part II** 24

Hadhrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Ahmad^(ra)

European Philosophy.. 41

Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad



Al-Haram Mosque in
Mecca.

(Photo by Fazal Ahmad)

Editorial

In this third millennium of the Common Era we are told that over half of this planet's six billion or so people allegedly profess to follow one faith or another. Yet religion itself seems to have disappeared from the main text of daily affairs and appears to have been left dangling as a mere footnote in this chapter of human life. It's not that there is no 'religious' activity in the world – for we hear much about actions being taken in the name of religion – but rather that its essence, its heart has been extracted leaving a hollow, lifeless shell that is exploited by some. What we observe about religion, therefore, is so tastelessly sandwiched between political aspirations of ideological demagogues and the egos of individuals, that the resulting hotchpotch makes a complete mockery of the noble ideals that religions implanted in this good earth. Religion has become a tool for self-advancement rather than for the advancement of one's self.

This is also reflected in the mirror of human behaviour, for human behaviour readily betrays any superficial claim to piety. We can see that morality, a manifestation of human conviction, is disappearing fast. Thus, if the outward expression of religion is fading then this is a sure sign that the inner struggle of the conscience is inevitably losing its virtuous momentum and will soon implode into nothingness. Such a microcosmic catastrophe has even greater implications for the macrocosmic future of humanity.

The rush to benefit from this calamity is all too apparent, but it is a travesty of the highest degree. It leaves true religion buried beneath mountains of clerics that claim to guard its integrity. Yet their beliefs have so digressed from the pure origins of religion that they do not stand up to either scientific scrutiny or human rationality. This in itself is a proof enough of their digression and the resultant shift in allegiance, from organised religion to atheism and agnosticism, is only to be expected.

Rationality compels one to accept or reject, and religion too cannot escape this axe of judgement that falls on all human actions. Call it an evolutionary outcome or a divine gift, but the fact remains that this tool of rationality serves to benefit man. It therefore follows that the original message and teachings of religions must have, at the very least, satisfied human rationality otherwise they would have gained few followers and lasted only a short while. The profound truth and unanimity of the original religious teachings with human nature can be gauged to this day as evidenced by the influence they exert even now, despite having been eroded by the hands of time and man.

Although much contemporary religion has only the odd spark of such truth, it is those sparks that momentarily attract people. The words of religious scriptures and prophets are immensely appealing because of their truth, and it is that truth that is tapped by opportunists and others and presented along with merely gold-plated offerings under the veneer of religious dogma. This reminds one of the Sufi saying, that 'it is only because there is such a thing as real gold, the people are taken in by the counterfeit'.

But what of the real gold, the real spiritual treasures? Are they lost forever? Such a situation would be irrational. If man exists today then so does his Creator and if man is in need of guidance then surely his Creator would provide it out of His mercy? If a prophet is indeed sent for this era, then surely he too will display the same power of logic in his arguments as prophets did before him? His message must also be rational and appeal to human nature. He should also gather people in his fold as a sign of his truth and his community should survive against the odds and, furthermore, their behaviour should reflect their inner convictions and the truth of their faith. Such a community should appeal to human logic and thus to follow it would only make sense.

Notes and Comments

Idol Threats

At the end of February and beginning of March 2001, the world was shocked by an announcement from the leadership of Afghanistan, the Taliban, that they considered certain historical Buddhist carvings to be un-Islamic and had therefore decided to destroy them.

The carvings in the mountainside in Afghanistan were hundreds of years old and were of Gautama Buddha^(as), founder of the Buddhist movement. These statues in the Afghani town of Bamiyan date back to between the 2nd and 5th centuries CE, at a time when Afghanistan was a centre of Buddhist learning and pilgrimage.

The Taliban considered these carvings to be idol-worship in that the Buddha was seen to be God by those followers rather than a prophet of God, and hence in their eyes, the Bamiyan statues would have been images of their god carved into the mountainside. The Taliban decided to take what they considered to be an Islamic course of action, and destroy the carvings.

Not only did this lead to immediate international condemnation from the world community, but it also led to the spectre of anti-Islamic feeling in Asia, and the burning of effigies and copies of the Holy Qur'an (the Muslim holy book) in India. This was because although the Taliban was clearly taking the action unilaterally, they claimed their justification comes from Islam, and therefore Islam became a target once again for the world media.

Ironical then that the Qur'an itself warns Muslims in Surah Al-An'am against taking such a course of action. The Qur'an states:

And if Allah had enforced His will, they would not have set up gods with Him. And We have not made thee a keeper over them, nor art thou over them a guardian. And revile not those whom they call upon beside Allah, lest they, out of spite, revile Allah in their ignorance. Thus unto every people have We caused their doing to seem fair. Then unto their Lord is their return; and He will inform them

of what they used to do.
(Ch:6:vs.108-109)

How emphatically God warns Muslims not to abuse the gods of other faiths even if they are idol-worshippers. God warns that in abusing such false gods, Muslims may incite them to in turn abuse Allah and the religion of Islam, and this is exactly what was seen in the aftermath of this incident. The verses quoted above even go so far as to show that if idols were to be destroyed, surely Allah could have enforced His will, and Allah does not need Muslims to destroy idols around the world for Him.

Only where a house dedicated to the worship of one God was turned into a place for idol-worship did prophets destroy the idols and return such a place of worship to the dedication of the One True God. Such was the case of the Ka'aba in Mecca where idols were destroyed by the Holy Prophet^(sa). But where there were churches, synagogues and other temples, these were not destroyed. Indeed, Muslims have been taught to defend houses of worship even during a battle.

Modern religious scholarship can only benefit from discoveries of ancient temples, scriptures and statues such as in Egypt, the Dead Sea and elsewhere. This is an essential part of mankind's heritage, which can only enhance our faith, and not destroy it. By destroying the Bamiyan statues, we are losing the evidence of other cultures and faiths that are mentioned in the Qur'an.

In the modern world, religious leaders should encourage religious dialogue rather than hatred. Surely we have learned by now that a sword can change a tongue, but never a heart. This teaching came from the Holy Prophet^(sa) himself to the Muslims.

It is essential that we respect the religions of the world. It is only through a scholarly study of all beliefs and practices around the world, be they regional religions or world religions, that the individual can determine truth and reason, and identify the true message of God.

Fazal Ahmad – UK

Islam – A Religion of Peace

(This article is based on a speech delivered by Abdul Ghany Jahangeer Khan, at Kingston University, Surrey, on the 6th of December 2000)

By Abdul Ghany Jahangeer Khan – UK

It is a matter of great concern that these days, many are those who, when they hear the religion of Islam being mentioned, at once think: "Trouble is on its way." And in view of the volatile and complicated political situation prevailing in some Islamic countries, the last thing a layman will equate Islam with is Peace.

Therefore, let me make it very clear that I have come to talk on Islam, the religion revealed by God to His Messenger, Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of God be upon him). I have not, and indeed cannot, come to represent the views of those Muslims who have digressed and moved far away from the holy teachings of Islam. The way many of them are living and presenting Islam is indeed the very negation of Peace, and, therefore, of Islam.

Another point that I wish to make, is that it is very easy to ascribe every beautiful notion or idea to a religion according to one's fancy; whereas a

detailed scrutiny of the revealed scriptures of that religion may well show that though the idea is appealing, it is, however, not to be found anywhere in the scriptures. To ascribe to a religion something that is not there, would be extremely dishonest and untruthful. Therefore, in order to truly represent Islam, I will not present mere wishful thinking, but rather I will provide references taken from the revealed scripture of Islam, that is the Holy Qur'an, and from its verbal interpretation made by the Holy Founder of Islam himself. Wherever God speaks of Himself as 'We' it is the *Royal Plural* commonly used in the Arabic language and is not at all an indication of there being several gods.

Islam is the only religion whose very name means 'Peace'. Its other meaning is 'Submission to the Will of God'. So by submitting to God's Will and to His Commandments, one becomes a 'Muslim', i.e. a person at peace with God, and a person who is

a source of peace for others.

God presents Himself as As-Salâm, or Peace personified, the Source of all Peace, in the Holy Qur'an. God desires peace for all His creatures, and does not wish to limit it to any individual, or tribe, or people. In Islam, there is no notion of 'Chosen People' as against Gentiles or Samaritans. There is no notion of high caste or low caste, or of Untouchables. All human beings are pronounced equal, and have an equal right to any guidance coming from God.

In the very first chapter, God proclaims: 'All praise belongs to Allah, Lord of, all the worlds.' meaning, He is the Lord God for all peoples and all living creatures, whichever world they live in.

In Chapter 7, verse 159, God commands the Prophet to say:

Say: O Mankind! truly I am a Messenger to you all of you from Allah, to Whom belongs the kingdom of the heavens and the earth. There is no God but He.'

In Chapter 14, verse 2:

I am Allah, the All-Seeing. This is a Book which We have revealed

to thee that thou mayest bring mankind out of every kind of darkness into light, by the command of their Lord, to the path of the Mighty, Praiseworthy one.

Islam, therefore, is a source of peace and comfort for every man and woman to know that they are all included in God's love and mercy. God does not say: deliver My message to this people, but not to that people. He says: deliver it to all alike.

God proclaims a universal brotherhood of man in Chapter 3, verse 104:

And hold fast, all together, by the rope of Allah, and be not divided; and remember the favour of Allah which He bestowed upon you when you were enemies and He united your hearts in love, so that by His grace you became as brothers. And you were on the brink of a pit of fire and He saved you from it. Thus does Allah explain to you His commandments that you may be guided.

At the very onset, Islam seeks to bring peace between people of different colours, languages and nations:

Chapter 30, verse 23:

And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the diversity of your tongues and colours. In that are surely Signs for those who possess knowledge.

Chapter 49, verse 14:

O Mankind, We have created you male and female; and have made you into clans and tribes that you may recognise one another. Verily the most honourable among you in the sight of Allah is he who is most righteous among you.

In his last sermon, the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be upon him), declared: 'You are all equal. All men, to whichever tribe or nation they belong, and whatever their place in society, are equal. No one can claim any right or any superiority over others. You are all brothers.'

So, every distinction or privilege, whether pertaining to colour, race or caste, to family lineage, rank or wealth, is abolished in Islam. Islam makes all Mankind into one great brotherhood, and exhorts us all to win the pleasure of God through righteousness and good conduct towards each other. So, in Islam, you will not find mosques for white men as opposed to mosques for black men. There will be no mosques for the rich as opposed to mosques for the poor. And in the houses of worship there will be no special place reserved for the powerful among Muslims. All must stand together, shoulder to shoulder, in their prayer to God.

So, Islam brings peace to all men who may be fighting each other because of the exaggerated importance they give to their natural, or other, differences.

Having addressed Mankind as a whole, inviting all to come to a religion where they will attain true communion with God, and where they will find peace and success, Islam addresses the individual, inviting him or her to sincerely worship God, to constantly speak to God, and to join the believers,

‘...whose hearts find comfort in the remembrance of Allah. Aye! It is in the remembrance of Allah that hearts can find comfort. Those who believe and do good works – happiness shall be theirs...’ (From Chapter 13, verses 29 and 30).

Islam extends its message of peace to every soul, especially to those who have lost hope and are wishing for an end to come swiftly to their suffering. God says:

Say, ‘O My servants who have committed excesses against their own souls! despair not of the mercy of Allah, surely, Allah forgives all sins. Verily He is Most Forgiving, Merciful.’
(Chapter 39, verse 54).

Man is a social creature. From the moment of his creation, man is tied, physically, emotionally and socially to his mother. Later on, his relationships will extend to his father, his siblings, his extended family, his neighbours, his class-fellows, his wife, his children, etc., and will continue to extend and expand throughout his life. If there is strife at any level of these human relationships, there will be disorder, and peace will be threatened, not

only for the individual in question, but eventually for the society in which he lives. Put in simpler terms, if a person behaves badly towards others, there will be no peace at home, and peace in the society will be affected.

Islam has provided vital guidelines for all the relationships, which human beings can have at every level, in order to ensure that there is peace in all these spheres.

After obedience to God, obedience to and loving respect for parents are enjoined again and again in the Holy Qur’an.

And We have enjoined on man to be good to his parents. His mother bears him with pain and brings him forth with pain.
(Chapter 46, verse 16)

Mothers have a place of special respect and eminence in Islam. The Holy Prophet^(sa) said: ‘Paradise lies under the feet of mothers.’ Meaning that if one obeys and serves one’s mother well, one will surely attain paradise.

Men are especially enjoined to be good to their wives. In Chapter 30,

verse 22, God says:

And one of His signs is this that He created wives for you from among yourselves that you may find peace of mind in them, and He has put love and tenderness between you. In that surely are signs for people who reflect.

In fact, the Holy Prophet^(sa) stressed the good treatment of wives so much that some of his companions began to fear that their wives might begin to rebel against them. Whatever rights women enjoy in Islam, those rights cannot be taken away by their husbands, if they are true Muslims and really fear God.

Muslims are enjoined to take good care of their children, both boys and girls, to educate them all in the best way, and to respect them. The Holy Prophet said that if you offer a gift to one of your children then you must also offer something similar to all the others, so as to maintain peace and justice between them (*Al-Bukhari, Kitab-ul-Hibah, and Muslim, Kitab-ul-Hibaat*). Special emphasis has been laid in the Holy Qur'an and in the sayings of the Holy Prophet^(sa) on the good treatment of girls (e.g. Sura At-

Takwir, vv. 9 and 10; Sura An-Nahl, vv. 59 and 60; Abu Dawud, Kitab-ul-Adab; Al-Bukhari, Kitab-uz-Zakah and Musnad Ahmad, Baqi Musnad Al-Ansar) so as to redress the situation of inferiority which girls are subjected to in many nations and cultures around the world.

Muslims are enjoined to be just and good to their relatives, to their neighbours, to their friends, even if they belong to other faiths.

O ye who believe! Be steadfast in the cause of Allah, bearing witness in equity; and let not a people's enmity incite you to act otherwise than with justice. Be always just, that is nearer to righteousness.

(Chapter 5, verse 9)

The aim is, as always, to establish peace at all costs. It is for this same reason that believers are enjoined to adopt good qualities such as truthfulness in all circumstances, humility, forgiveness, charity, honesty, sincerity, chastity and many more. Others such as falsehood, rebellion, indecency, causing harm to others, etc. are strongly condemned and prohibited. Islam has introduced are there to preserve

peace at every level of society.

Again mankind is reminded of their common origin:

*O ye people! Fear your Lord,
Who created you from a single
being and created therefrom its
mate, and from the two spread
many men and women.*

(Chapter 4, verse 2)

The Holy Founder of Islam^(sa) said:
'You cannot be a believer as long as
you do not wish for others that
which you desire for yourselves.
And: That one is not a Muslim,
whose neighbour is not safe from
the mischief (of his tongue or hand)'
(*Al-Bukhari, Kitab-ur-Riqaq*)

This explains the emphasis laid by
Islam on the sanctity of transactions
and dealings between nations, of a
commercial nature or otherwise.
Muslims are enjoined in the Holy
Qur'an to fulfil their covenants, to
give full measure, to be
scrupulously honest and to refrain
from asking for interest on money
they lend to anyone. The Qur'an
warns, at the end of Chapter 2, that
systems based on interest will
eventually lead to ugly situations of
war. So, all measures are taken to

prevent such situations from ever
arising. On the contrary, God forbids
hoarding of wealth and encourages
healthy investment to keep wealth in
circulation, and enjoins charity to all
those who are needy, whether it be
for the poor, the destitute, or
orphans, for freeing prisoners or for
helping a needy wayfarer, for human
beings or for animals. The Qur'anic
verses on charity are numerous, but
I will quote just two:

Chapter 76, verses 9 and 10:

*And they feed, for the love of
Allah, the poor, the orphan, the
prisoner, saying: 'We feed you
for Allah's pleasure only. We
desire no reward nor thanks from
you.'*

Chapter 2, verse 272:

*If you give alms openly, it is well
and good; but if you conceal
them and give them to the poor, it
is better for you; And He will
remove from you many of your
sins. And Allah is aware of what
you do.*

In order to create an atmosphere of
love and peace, the believers are
also enjoined not to give 'just any

old thing' in charity:

In Chapter 2, verse 268, God warns:

O ye who believe! spend of the good things that you have earned, and of what We produce for you from the earth; and seek not what is bad to spend out of it, when you would not take it yourselves except with eyes downcast with shame.

To keep peace in the family and in society, Muslims are warned not to indulge in indecent activities, or in gambling or drinking, which would disrupt their lives and the lives of many others:

O ye who believe! Intoxicants and games of chance and idols and divining the future are only an abomination of Satan's handiwork. So shun each of them that you may prosper. Satan desires only to create enmity and hatred among you by means of intoxicants and games of chance, and to keep you back from the remembrance of Allah and from Prayer. But will you keep back?

(Chapter 5, verses 91 and 92)

If the believers are attacked and unjustly persecuted just because of their faith, they are permitted by God in the Holy Qur'an to defend themselves. But they are warned that they should never be the aggressors and that they should hasten to re-establish peace as quickly as possible:

So make peace between brothers and fear Allah that mercy may be shown to you.

(Chapter 49, verse 22)

Freedom of conscience is thus a prerequisite for the establishment of peace, and it must be safeguarded in all circumstances. God permits believers to fight those who forcefully prevent them from worshipping God, saying:

And fight them until there is no persecution, and religion is freely professed for Allah. But if they desist, then remember that no hostility is allowed except against the aggressors.

(Chapter 2, verse 194)

Muslims are severely warned against ever persecuting others for their faith in Chapter 2, verse 218: '...persecution is worse than

‘killing.’ and verse 257: ‘There should be no compulsion in religion.’

Peace between followers of all religions is stressed in the Holy Qur’an. Although God repeatedly and strongly condemns the worship of idols, He forbids the Muslims to ever revile the deities and idols that have been fashioned and created by the hands of men:

And revile not those whom they call upon beside Allah, lest they, out of spite, revile Allah, in their ignorance.

(Chapter 6, verse 109)

Indeed, the Holy Qur’an is the only revealed book in which God states that He has sent Messengers to all people, without exception, and that we must believe in all. No Muslim can say that other revealed religions are not from God:

And We did raise among every people a Messenger preaching: ‘Worship Allah and shun the Evil One.’

(Chapter 16, verse 37)

Say; ‘We believe in Allah, and in that which has been revealed to

us, and that which was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the Tribes, and that which was given to Moses and Jesus and other Prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction between them, and to Him we submit.’

(Chapter 3, verse 85)

Not only have the prophets of the Middle East been mentioned, but a great Messenger of God who appeared in India was also mentioned with love by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be with him) to his companions. He said: ‘There was a Prophet in India; his colour was dark and his name was Kahin.’ (*Tarikh Hamdan, Dailmi, Bab-ul-Kaf*) The reference is to prophet Krishna (Peace be with him), who was also called *Krishna Kanhayya*, or Krishna the dark-skinned one, pronounced *Kahin* in Arabic.

So, all religions truly revealed by God to His Messengers are fully respected in Islam. This can only bring mankind to harmony, unity and peace among religions.

Although these days, followers of many religions extend the hand of

friendship to others in an effort to co-operate in all things good, and this can only be commended, the fact remains that it is only the Qur'an which, as a revealed book, sends out this invitation. In no other book will one find the slightest hint of the need for believers to invite followers of other religions to collaborate in good deeds. The import of the verse which follows is to emphasise the point of commonality – that we all claim to worship the same God – and to chalk out a mutual programme for the benefit of mankind rather than highlight the areas of difference resulting in discord:

Say; O People of the Book! come to a word equal between us and you – that we worship none but Allah, and that we associate no partner with Him, and that some of us take not others for Lords beside Allah'.

(Chapter 3, verse 65)

So Islam proclaims that if all men forget their differences, and remember that they all come from the same God, whether one calls Him Allah, or Eloh, or Jehovah, or Parmeshwar, or Nzambe, or by any other name, as He is One and the

Same, mankind should be able to unite in their efforts to do good. But if they turn away from the True God, and start to worship God's creatures, or other gods, then they will be forever divided, and will drift away from the True Source of Peace, i.e. God Himself.

Thus Islam is all about unity. Unity of God, unity of the universe, unity of mankind and unity of life. The object of Islam is to bring unity, the source of all peace, within the individual, in the family, in the nation, and in the world. This desire to establish peace is not a silent one in Islam. God taught all believers to greet the world with the salutation of peace. Muslims do not know any other way of saluting or greeting God's creatures except by saying: May Peace be with you. And this is the salutation taught by God to all His Messengers and Prophets.

In order to prove to Mankind that the message of the Qur'an is true and that it can really bring its followers to complete Peace, God has put forward hundreds of sound arguments that can only appeal to people who think logically and to those who cannot honestly accept any contradictions. In addition, God

has expounded a great number of scientific and historical truths which were absolutely unknown to the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace be with him) and which have been verified by science after him. All this to show that this book really does emanate from the All-Knowing, All-Seeing God. Thus we find the Qur'an to be astonishingly free from historical or scientific errors of any type. This knowledge brings total peace of mind to the believers, as there is no conflict left between religion and science in their lives. All that remains is Peace at every level.

Finally, Islam teaches that to obtain true Peace, one must continue to pray for it to God, for He is the true source of all Peace. Real Peace cannot come from the scheming of men. It can only come from God. And in the words of the Holy Messenger, Muhammad, peace be with him:

*Allahumma, antas-salaamu wa
minkas-salaamu,
tabaarakta yaa dhal-jalaali wal-
ikraam.*

Lord, You are all Peace, and from
You emanates all Peace.

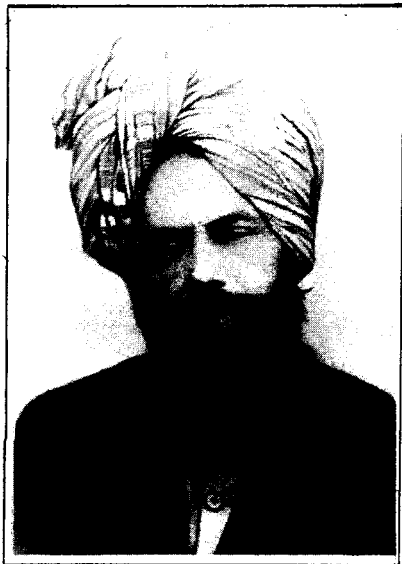
Blessed are You indeed, O
Possessor of Majesty and Honour.
(At-Tirmidhi, Kitab-us-Salah)

References:

1. *Islam's Response to Contemporary Issues*, by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad.
2. *The Contribution of Islam to the Solution of World Problems*, by Sir Ch. Mohammad Zafrullah Khan



The Reality of Paradise



**Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as)
(The Promised Messiah and Mahdi)**

Presented below is a collection of excerpts, under the heading of 'Reality of Paradise'. These excerpts have been taken from the speeches and discourses of Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as) of Qadian, the Promised Messiah and Mahdi, as recorded in the collection entitled *Malfoozat*.

*Compiled and translated by Amatul
Hadi Ahmad*

(Translator's note: All references to the verses of the Holy Qur'an are given in Arabic as they occur in the text. The English translation, presented in italics, is taken from the translation of the Holy Qur'an by Hadhrat Maulvi Sher Ali Sahib^(ra). Where the Promised Messiah^(as) has himself stated a certain interpretation of the Arabic verse, this is incorporated in the main body of the text).

*Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^(as),
the Promised Messiah and Mahdi,
states:*

It is our firm belief that even if a philosophy or a science were to progress thousands of times further than its present stage, the Holy Qur'an is such a perfect book that the new developments in knowledge can never overwhelm it. However, the person who has never carefully studied even as much as one sentence of it, cannot be the one who can defend it.

For example, in the Qur'anic teachings, there is described the spiritual philosophy of Paradise that relates to the endowment of rewards in the hereafter. These are described

in terms of gardens beneath which flow streams of water. Such descriptions may appear to be like a story but they are not a story. They have a reality and it is this that at the time of Islam's beginning, people generally were unfamiliar with spiritual matters. They were like small children as far as such matters were concerned. It was necessary that such deep and fine philosophies were explained in terms that the people could relate to and in a form of symbolism and examples that would help their understanding of the realities of these matters. It is for this reason that the Holy Qur'an has adopted such means for explaining the reality of the nature of Paradise. [In describing the symbolism of Paradise], the Holy Qur'an states:

مَثَلُ الْجَنَّةِ الَّتِي
وُعِدَ الْمُتَّقُونَ

*The similitude of the Heaven
promised to the God-fearing.*
(Ch13:v.36)

That is, it is [being expressed in terms] of an example – it is not the actuality. From the words used by the Holy Qur'an, it is evident that the actual 'Paradise' is something

quite different. The Holy Prophet(sa) has also expressed the view that we should not go by the apparent and physical descriptions alone as 'Paradise' was something that no eye had seen nor any ear had heard its sound. However, the rewards and bounties of Paradise that have been mentioned, are in terms of things that we have seen and heard. For instance, at one stage in the Holy Qur'an, it is stated:

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ
لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

*And give glad tidings to those
who believe and do good works,
that for them are Gardens
beneath which flow streams.*
(Ch.2:v.26)

In this verse, 'belief' has been placed next to 'good deeds' and 'gardens' next to 'streams of water'. This signifies that the 'gardens' are the consequence of belief [in God]

and the 'streams of water' are the consequence of good deeds [performed for the sake of God]. Just as a garden cannot survive without water, or without a regular supply of water, so does belief become useless without the 'nourishment' of good deeds. At another place, the Holy Qur'an makes a resemblance between belief and the plurality of trees and states that the faith towards which Muslims are called, is like 'trees'. The good actions of a believer act as a supply water for these trees.

In short, the more one ponders over these matters, the greater understanding of their meanings and the significance of their deep philosophy becomes more apparent. Just as it is necessary for a farmer to sow the seeds, so it is essential for one who wishes to 'reap' the results of his spiritual journey, that he too should not only sow the necessary 'seeds', but also nurture the seedlings by providing a good source of 'water supply' for his spiritual garden which in this case would be provided by his acts of goodness.

Remember that without good deeds faith is just as useless as an excellent garden is useless when it is deprived

of water. No matter how excellent is a tree and how good the fruit it gives, when the owner is careless about its irrigation then we are all familiar with the consequences. The same is true of the tree of faith in spiritual life. Faith is a tree for which deeds of goodness become like streams of water for its nourishment. Moreover, just as after sowing and watering the seeds, a farmer has to work hard in many other ways to ensure a good harvest, so is the case in the spiritual realm. God has made it necessary and essential that for the attainment of the fruits of spiritual reward and blessings, there should be great effort and striving. (*Malfoozat*, Vol.10, pp.394-396)

The real source of the pleasures of Paradise are a person's own actions. If a person does not abandon the religion that is at one with his nature and does not depart from the point of equilibrium (if, as a servant of God, his soul lies at the threshold of the Almighty, being illuminated by the Divine Light) then such a one is like the healthy limb that performs the proper function for which it was created by God – in performing its proper function it feels not pain but pleasure.

The Holy Qur'an states:

وَبَشِّرِ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا
وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ
لَهُمْ جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

*And give glad tidings to those
who believe and do good works,
that for them are Gardens
beneath which flow streams.*
(Ch.2:v.26)

In this verse God Almighty has referred to belief [in God] as a garden and righteous actions as streams of water. This is the relationship between righteous actions and faith. As no garden can flourish and bring forth fruit without water, similarly, no faith is useful unless it accompanied by righteous actions. Thus, Paradise is the personification of belief with the accompanying righteous actions. As in the case of Hell, Heaven is not something that exists externally – a person's heaven is generated from within him.

The pleasure of Paradise is the pure spirit that is developed in the world. Faith is a plant and righteous actions are like streams of water that irrigate that plant and maintain its greenness and its grandeur. In this world the symbolism of Paradise is perceived like a dream but in the other world it will be felt and observed as a reality. That is why it is said that when these bounties will be bestowed upon the dwellers of heaven, they will say:

ثَمَرَةٍ رِزْقًا قَالُوا
هَذَا الَّذِي رُزِقْنَا
مِنْ قَبْلُ وَأُتُوا بِهِ
مُتَشَابِهًا

*'This is what was given us
before', and gifts mutually
resembling shall be brought to
them.*
(Ch.2:v.26)

This does not mean that there will be bestowed in heaven the milk and honey, the grapes and pomegranates etc., that we consume here. They will be something entirely different except in name. These things are

described physically but we are informed that they illumine the soul and lead to a greater understanding of God. Their source is the soul and righteousness. By speaking of these things in terms of their similarity to what has been given to us before, is not meant that they will be physical things or bounties of this world. The true meaning is this that the Believers who act righteously, make with their own hands a heaven, the fruits of which they will enjoy in the next world. However, as they will have spiritually tasted of that 'fruit' in this world, they will recognise it in the next world and would exclaim that these appear to be the same fruits as they had enjoyed previously in the world. Such will be the symbolic representation of the spiritual progress they make in this world and as such those who sincerely strive in this path in this world will recognise them in the next.

(*Malfoozat* , Vol. 3, pp.28-29)

Faith is a great treasure and it is the name given to that stage of acceptance of something about which full knowledge has not yet been attained and there is still some struggle with doubts and suspicions.

Under such conditions, he who attests with the truthfulness of his heart and words, is the one referred to as a Believer, a 'Mo'min'. Such a one is counted among the Truthful in the sight of the Divine Lord. At such an act of a truthful person, the higher stages of knowledge of God are opened for him by way of a special endowment from God Almighty. In reality, it is with such a faith and such a true belief that real Paradise begins. Hence, in the Holy Qur'an wherever there is a mention of Paradise, it is preceded by a mention of belief and acts of goodness. [In the Holy Qur'an] the reward of faith together with acts of goodness have been stated as:

جَنَّاتٍ تَجْرِي مِنْ
تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ

*Gardens beneath which flow
streams. (Ch.2:v.26)*

That is, the reward of faith is the Garden of Paradise and as streams of water are required to keep the garden green and luscious, such streams of flowing water are the consequence of acts of goodness.

FOR A TRUE BELIEVER THERE IS A PARADISE IN THIS WORLD FOR EVERY SITUATION THAT HE MAY FIND HIMSELF IN. THE 'PARADISE' THAT EXISTS FOR HIM IN THIS WORLD CONTAINS THE PROMISE OF PARADISE IN THE NEXT WORLD.

The reality of this is that acts of goodness performed in this world, will take on a symbolic resemblance, in the next world, to the flowing streams of water. In this world also we witness that the more a person progresses in his acts of goodness and the more he safeguards himself against indulging in any deeds that may be acts of disobedience to God Almighty and the more he abandons the practices that transgress against the limits set by God, the greater is the increase in the strength of his faith. Every new act of goodness brings him greater satisfaction and he attains a deeper inner strength. The knowledge of God begins to give him pleasure until such time as a believer is granted by God's Grace a state of love for God in which he becomes totally immersed. The light of God engulfs his heart completely and all manner of darkness and hindrances are removed from his path. In this state all difficulties and tribulations that are placed in the path towards

God, do not worry the seeker for one moment. Instead, facing tribulation [in the path of God] becomes a source of pleasure for such people. This is the final stage of belief.

There are seven aspects of belief and an additional, final one that is granted through the love and grace of God. This is why there are seven 'doors' of Paradise and the eighth one is opened only through the special Grace of God. It is worth remembering that heaven and hell that will be found in the next world will not be something entirely new. They are an image formed by a person's faith and his actions and this is its true philosophy. It will not be something that will be given to a person from the outside – it is something that emanates from within a human being. For a true believer there is a Paradise in this world for every situation that he may find himself in. The 'Paradise' that exists for him in this world contains the promise of Paradise in

the next world. How clear this matter is that the Paradise for all human beings is formed by their own beliefs and good deeds. The enjoyment of its pleasure begins in this very world. It is the same belief and righteous actions of this world that appear as gardens of Paradise together with the flowing streams of water.

(*Malfoozat*, Vol. 2, pp.386-389)

The highest form of pleasure is to be found only in God. Something is referred to as *Janna* [i.e Paradise] when the meaning of 'being hidden' or 'covered up' is implied. *Janna* or Paradise is given this name because it will be covered up with all manner of good things in the form of rewards and bounties. However, it is God who is the real Paradise and there cannot be any anxiety associated with such a state. It is for this reason that the greatest reward of Paradise is expressed in the following terms in the Holy Qur'an:

وَرِضْوَانٌ مِّنَ اللَّهِ أَكْبَرُ

The pleasure of Allah is the greatest of all.

(Ch.9:v.72)

A HUMAN BEING IS ALWAYS ENGULFED IN SOME PROBLEM OR OTHER. HOWEVER, THE CLOSER HE BECOMES TO GOD AND THE MORE HE ADOPTS AND INCULCATES WITHIN HIM THE ATTRIBUTES OF GOD, THE GREATER WILL BE HIS COMFORT AND SOLACE.

A human being is always engulfed in some problem or other. However, the closer he becomes to God and the more he adopts and inculcates within him the attributes of God, the greater will be his comfort and solace. By the same token, the closer he is to God, the greater the endowment of God upon him and the greater will be his share of the bounties of God.

(*Malfoozat*, Vol. 2, p.137)

It is essential that a person strives to gain in this world the capacities that enable one to enjoy the pleasures of Paradise. These capacities are not attainable without righteousness. A human being cannot see God with his physical eyes. However the 'eyes' of righteousness can enable a

THOSE WHO SEARCH FOR GOD WITH A PURE HEART AND TOTAL SINCERITY, ERASING THE MARKS OF THEIR SELFISH NATURE AS THEY WORSHIP GOD, BEGIN TO FIND IN THIS A PLEASURE AND THERE BEGINS FOR THEM AN ENDOWMENT [FROM GOD] OF SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT THAT LIGHTENS UP THE SOUL AND GRANTS GREATER AND GREATER KNOWLEDGE OF GOD.

person to 'see' God. If a person were to adopt the ways of righteousness, he would feel that he is 'seeing' God and a day would come when he will himself state that he has, indeed, seen God. The existence of Paradise in this world for such people has been further described in the Holy Qur'an in these terms:

كَلَّمَآ رَزَقُوا مِنْهَا
مِنْ شَرَّةٍ رَزَقَا
قَالُوا هَذَا الَّذِي
رَزَقْنَا مِنْ قَبْلُ

Whenever they are given a portion of fruit therefrom, they will say: 'This is what was given us before'

(Ch.2:v.26)

That is, in the hereafter, when they will taste of the fruits of the trees of Paradise, they will say that these are the fruits that had been given to them before – they will find them to be similar to those they had tasted before. This does not imply that they had previously tasted the physical things of this world such as milk and honey, pomegranates and grapes etc. All such notions are totally erroneous. If the rewards of heaven were to be such things as are to be found in this world, then what would be the difference between believers and non-believers? In the attainment of worldly things, the non-believers and the pagans, all have an equal share with others. What then is the distinction of Paradise? From the Holy Qur'an and from the traditions of the Holy Prophet it is evident that the bounties of Paradise are such that no eye has seen them, no ear has heard them and not even a hint of them has passed through the hearts and

minds. However, we see the things of this world – they have been seen by all eyes and heard by all ears and the idea of them passes through the hearts and minds. From this it is evident that although the rewards of heaven are expressed in words that liken them to things that exist in this world, they are in fact *something totally different*. Here the question arises as to what then would be the meaning of the words: ‘This is what was given to us before’ (Ch.2: v.26). The interpretation here will be the same as the interpretation of the verse:

وَمَنْ كَانَ فِي هَذِهِ أَعْمَى
فَهُوَ فِي الْآخِرَةِ أَعْمَى

*But whoso is blind in this world
will be blind in the Hereafter.*
(Ch.17:v.73)

[Here the word ‘blind’ refers to the lack of spiritual sight and not to the absence of physical sight].

At another place, the Holy Qur’an states:

وَلِسَنٌ خَافَ مَقَامَ
رَبِّهِ جَنَّتَيْنِ

*But for him who fears to stand
before his Lord there are two
Gardens.*
(Ch.55:v.47)

He who fears His Lord and stands in awe of God’s Greatness and Majesty, for such a one there are two Gardens of Paradise – one in this world and the other in the hereafter. Those who search for God with a pure heart and total sincerity, erasing the marks of their selfish nature as they worship God, begin to find in this a pleasure and there begins for them an endowment [from God] of spiritual nourishment that lightens up the soul and grants greater and greater knowledge of God.

(*Malfoozat*, Vol 6, pp.178-179).



Biblical Prophecy about the Holy Prophet^(sa) – Part II

Extract from the Introduction to the Study of the Holy Qur'an by Hadhrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad – the second Khalifa of the Promised Messiah^(as).

Isaiah's Prophecies

The book of Isaiah also is full of prophecies about the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa). They all point to the advent of another great Prophet, the harbinger of peace and contentment for the whole world. In accordance with the divine way, however, the prophecies contain a symbolic element which has to be interpreted before the meaning of the prophecies can be unravelled. The use in them of such names as Jerusalem, Zion, etc., is only symbolic. But Christian writers have been misled by these symbols into thinking that the prophecies relate to Jesus^(as). Names qua names do not constitute any part of the prophecies. If the general content of the prophecies does not apply to Jesus, the names Jerusalem or Israel or Zion will not justify the application. True, the names also have a meaning, but a meaning which fits into the main content of the prophecies. As such the names Jerusalem and Israel will only mean

'My holy places' or "My select people", not Jerusalem or Israel per se.

(a) The first prophecy we wish to quote from Isaiah is contained in 4: 1-3. It is as follows:

And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name to take away our reproach. In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel. And it shall come to pass that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem.

Once it is agreed that Zion and Jerusalem in this prophecy are but

symbols, the entire content of the prophecy is seen to apply to the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa) and to no one else. The prophecy says that the Promised Prophet will bring with him wealth and splendour, that he will have treasures of the earth laid at his feet, that his people will be called holy and that polygamous marriages will be the rule at the time. Do these signs apply to Jesus^(as) and his disciples? Did they bring with them a period of wealth and splendour? Were the treasures of the earth laid at their feet? Was polygamy in demand by their society? No. The signs apply only to the Holy Prophet^(sa) of Islam, his followers and his time. Jesus^(as) is supposed to have disapproved of polygamous marriages. But the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa) sanctioned and even commanded these under certain conditions. It was in his time that wars had to be fought in defence of religion and the youth of the nation had to lay down their lives. The number of widows increased and young women had difficulty in finding husbands. The Holy Prophet^(sa), accordingly, ordered polygamous marriages to prevent immorality and to make up for lost man-power.

(b) In Isaiah (5: 26-30) we have:

And he will lift up an ensign to the nations from far, and will hiss unto them from the end of the earth: and, behold, they shall come with speed swiftly: None shall be weary nor stumble among them; nor shall slumber nor sleep; neither shall the girdle of their loins be loosed, nor the latchet of their shoes be broken: whose arrows are sharp, and all their bows bent, their horses' hoofs shall be counted like flint, and their wheels like a whirlwind: Their roaring shall be like a lion, they shall roar like young lions: yea, they shall roar, and lay hold of the prey, and shall carry it away safe, and none shall deliver it. And in that day they shall roar against them like the roaring of the sea: and if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof.

A time was to come, according to this prophecy, when somewhere outside Palestine, a man would raise a flag. This man would call the nations of the world who would swiftly answer his call and gather

around him. Those who responded to him would shun sloth and indolence and make great sacrifices for their cause. They would take part in wars and their horses' hoofs would emit fire like flint. Their attacks on their enemy would resemble a whirlwind. They would completely overpower their enemy whom no one would be able to save. And why should they do all this? Because they would see that the world was full of darkness and a big change called for.

This prophecy applies in its entirety to the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa). There is a reference to it in the Qur'an also. In accordance with it, the Holy Prophet^(sa) appeared away from Palestine in Mecca, and raised his flag in Medina; it was he who announced to the world:

Say, 'O mankind, truly I am a Messenger to you all.
(Ch.7: v.159).

It was his voice to which men and women from the ends of the earth responded with great alacrity. In Jesus' life not one convert came from outside Israel. All his disciples came from within a radius of forty to fifty miles. But believers in the

Prophet of Islam^(sa) came from Yemen and Najd and Iran, and among them were idol-worshippers and Jews and Christians. They made such great sacrifices at the Prophet's^(sa) call and exerted themselves for it so ungrudgingly that the worst enemies of Islam feel constrained to pay a tribute to their spirit of devotion and sacrifice. God Himself pays a tribute to them in the Qur'an thus:

Allah is well pleased with them and they are well pleased with Him.
(Ch.9: v.100).

There are some of them who have fulfilled their vow, and some who still wait.
(Ch.33:v.24)

The Prophet's followers had to take part in wars and to make use of bows and arrows. Their horses' hoofs were like flint and their wheels like the whirlwind. To this also there is a clear reference in the Qur'an:

By the snorting chargers of the warriors, striking sparks of fire, and making raids at dawn, and raising clouds of dust thereby,

*and penetrating thereby into the
centre of the enemy forces.*

(Ch.100: vs. 2-6)

*those who believe and do good
deeds out of every kind of
darkness into light.*

This is a description of the warriors of early Islam, and 'how truly does it correspond to the prophecy of Isaiah.

We have in one part of the prophecy:

*And if one look unto the land,
behold darkness and sorrow. and
the light is darkened in the
heavens thereof.*

(Isaiah 5: 30),

The Qur'an refers to this in 30:42 thus:

*Corruption has appeared on
land and sea.*

That is, both human wisdom and divine teaching have become dark and both point to the need of a new Teacher, bearer of a new Message from God.

Also in 65: 11-12 we have:

*Allah has indeed sent down to
you a reminder — A Messenger
who recites unto you the clear
Signs of Allah, that he may bring*

(c) In Isaiah (8: 13-17) we have:

*Sanctify the Lord of hosts
himself; and let him be your fear,
and let him be your dread. And
he shall be for a sanctuary; but
for a stone of stumbling and for
a rock of offence to both the
houses of Israel, for a gin and
for a snare to the inhabitants of
Jerusalem. And many among
them shall stumble, and fall, and
be broken, and be snared, and be
taken. Bind up the testimony,
seal the law among my disciples.
And I will wait upon the Lord,
that hideth his face from the
house of Jacob, and I will look
for him.*

The prophecy clearly foretells the appearance of a Holy One whose coming will prove a trial for both Houses of Israel, a snare and a gin for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, who will be defeated and disgraced if they choose to oppose him. His advent will mark the supersession of the Mosaic Law and God will turn away His face from the House of Jacob.

Christian writers are silent on this point. Maybe they take the two Houses of Israel to mean the two factions, one of which supported and the other opposed the son of Solomon and set up a rival rule. But this will not do, because the prophecy speaks of a holy man and of events which will take place in his time. This holy man can either be Jesus^(as) or some one coming after Jesus^(as), because there has been no outstanding religious personality between Isaiah^(as) and Jesus^(as) who may have confronted Israel with a crucial Message. But did Jesus^(as) confront Israel with any such Message? And did Israel suffer defeat and disgrace on opposing this Message? And did Jesus^(as) seal the Law for his disciples and announce its supersession by another Law? As for this, Jesus^(as) declaration is quite clear. He said:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets, I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

(Matthew 5: 17-18).

Jesus^(as) settled the point not for his own time only but also for the future. He said significantly:

Can the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.
(Mark 2: 19-20).

From these declarations it is obvious that, according to Jesus^(as), even after his death, the Mosaic Law was to remain binding upon his disciples. Were this not so, he could have said that the days of fasting were over. Instead of this he not only fasted himself, but he also prophesied that his disciples would begin to fast after him. Sealing the Law, therefore, does not mean abolition of the Law as such or repudiation of the very idea of determinate religious duties. It means that in the time of the Promised Holy Man, the Mosaic Law would become superseded and a new Law would become established in its place. If this interpretation of ours is not true, why were we told that God would

turn away His face from the House of Jacob? Did not Jesus^(as) belong to the House of Jacob? If he did not so belong, he could not be a descendant of David. And if he was not a descendant of David, he could not be the Christ of the prophecy. For Christ was to be a descendant of David:

(d) In Isaiah (9: 6-7) we have:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgement and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

The prophecy promises the advent of a king who will have five names or titles: (1) Wonderful. (2) Counsellor. (3) The mighty God. (4) The everlasting Father. (5) The Prince of Peace. The prosperity and

peace in his empire will know no bounds; he will sit on the throne of David for ever and perpetuate its good name by judgement and justice.

Annotators of the Gospels say in their head-notes to this chapter that this prophecy relates to the birth of Jesus^(as). But of the signs mentioned in this prophecy, not one applies to Jesus^(as). Did he for instance, ever become king? Were the names enumerated in the prophecy—Wonderful, Counsellor, mighty God, everlasting Father, Prince of Peace, ever applied to him? Wonderful, he might have been called, because of his peculiar birth. But the description does not seem to have been proposed. His deniers regarded his birth as illegitimate, so they could not describe him as Wonderful. His supporters, on the other hand, were in doubt about his ancestry. According to some he was a son of David. We have:

If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

(Matthew 27: 42,44)

Jesus^(as) gave no exhibition of his 'might', nor was he ever described as 'mighty' by anybody. Both friend and foe denied this of him. Were this not the case, his disciples would not have deserted him and fled. Says Matthew (26: 56):

Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

Does a mighty one meet with such a fate?

The fourth name is everlasting Father, and this also does not apply to Jesus^(as). For, as we have shown already, he foretold another who would come after him.

The fifth name is Prince of Peace and even this cannot apply to Jesus^(as). He never became king, so he never could bring peace to the world. Instead, he remained oppressed by the Jews and was ultimately put on the Cross by them.

The prophecy lays down as a sign, 'Of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end'. Jesus^(as) never attained to any government and, therefore, never could witness its increase.

Another sign is, 'Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgement and with justice from henceforth even for ever,' and even this does not apply to Jesus^(as).

These signs apply to the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa). It was he who had to shoulder the responsibilities of State and who, quite against his will, found himself a king. It is an irony of fate that Jesus^(as), who never became king, constantly dreamed of being one (Matthew, 21: 4, 5 and 27: 11; Luke, 23: 1-3). The Holy Prophet^(sa) was king; yet he hated being one, and constantly warned his followers against imitating the ways of Kaiser and Chosroes.

One name of the Promised One is Wonderful. Jesus^(as) admits that the bearer of this name was to come after him. We have this admission in the parable of the vineyard (Matthew, 21: 33-44). The parable is: A householder planted a vineyard and let it out to husbandmen. He then sent his servants to collect the fruit, but the husbandmen beat or killed or stoned the servants one by one. He sent more servants, but they also were maltreated like the others. He then sent his son, but the

husbandmen killed the son. Having said so much, Jesus^(as) asked:

When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

(21: 40).

And those who heard answered:

He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

(21: 41).

But Jesus^(as) said again:

Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in, our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind, him to powder.

(21: 42-44).

That is to say, after the son had been slain, there would be another one sent by God, the one who would prove 'the head of the corner', and who would seem 'marvellous' in the eyes of Jesus^(as) and of all others. The Marvellous One, therefore, would come after the son is slain. It can only be the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa) who appeared after Jesus^(as) who was put on the Cross.

The third name of the Promised One is Counsellor. The name applies pre-eminently to the Holy Prophet^(sa). A nation turned to him for advice. He, in turn, held regular consultation with his people, and made it obligatory on the State to consult the people in all important matters. That the Prophet was a much-consulted person is evident from the Qur'an. We have:

O ye who believe! when you consult the Messenge in private, give alms before your consultation. That is better for you and purer. But if you find not anything to give, then know that Allah is Most Forgiving, Merciful.

(Ch.58: v.13).

The rule about giving in charity before consulting, makes it clear that consulting the Prophet^(sa) had become a regular institution, and, a voluntary fee had been introduced to raise money for the poor. The rule was meant for those who could afford it. The Prophet^(sa) had come to have so many calls on his time that it seemed possible and desirable to make a suitable charge on individual applicants. The charge was justified because the Prophet's^(sa) time had to be devoted to the benefit of mankind at large; if individuals applied for the use of his time, it was meet they should pay something into the public treasury. Consulting the Prophet^(sa), therefore, had become a regular institution. The Prophet^(sa) more than anybody else deserves to be called the Counsellor. The Prophet^(sa) also instituted the system of consultation as an essential condition of good government.

Says the Qur'an:

And whose affairs are decided by mutual consultation.

(Ch.42: v.39)

General measures and administrative rules are not to be initiated until the people's representatives

have been consulted. Following this injunction, the Holy Prophet^(sa) laid down consultation as an important duty of the Khalifa, or elected head of Muslims. He is reported to have said, 'There is no Khilafat without consultation'. (Izalat al-Khifa 'an Khilafat al-Khulafa). A State administered without consulting the people would be un-Islamic. Compared with this, what did Jesus^(as) do as counsellor? He never consulted on any considerable scale. Nor did he encourage counselling as an institution. The Holy Prophet^(sa), therefore, was the Counsellor of the prophecy and not Jesus^(as).

The third name in the prophecy is mighty God. The Old Testament points to a resemblance between God and Moses^(as). Thus in Exodus (7: 1) we have:

*And the Lord said unto Moses,
See, I have made thee a god to
Pharaoh.*

And again in Exodus (4: 16):

*And thou shalt be to him (Aaron)
instead of God.*

In the Bible, Jesus^(as) is called son of God and Moses^(as) a 'like of God'.

Whenever, therefore, a human being is spoken of as a 'like of God', it would mean Moses^(as) or some one like Moses^(as). Moses^(as) we have shown above, foretold of a prophet like himself (Deut. 18: 18), and he is no other than the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa), he being the one who really answers to the description of the prophecy. It is the Prophet of Islam^(sa), therefore, who can most legitimately be called God or, better, a Manifestation of God. We have references relevant to this in the Qur'an. At the Battle of Badr, the Prophet^(sa) took a handful of gravel and threw it at the enemy. This proved a signal for a dust storm which discomfited the enemy and contributed to his defeat. Of this, God says to the Prophet^(sa):

And thou threwest not when thou didst throw, but it was Allah Who threw.
(8: 18).

Similarly at the time of entering Islam, new believers used to take the oath of allegiance to the Prophet^(sa). Referring to this God says in the Qur'an:

Verily, those who swear allegiance to thee indeed swear

allegiance to Allah.
(Ch.48: v.11)

The Prophet does service for God. The term 'God' of the prophecy, therefore, applies to the Prophet rather than to anybody else. So does the expression 'mighty'. For it was he who was able to subjugate all his enemies in his lifetime and to smash all opposition.

The fourth name in the prophecy is everlasting Father. This also applies to the Prophet^(sa) and to no one else. It was he who claimed unambiguously a lasting character for his teaching. For he foretold the second coming of Christ, but the second coming of Christ was to be in the person of one of the Prophet's own followers, not one whose coming could violate his spiritual dominion. Referring to this God says in the Qur'an:

And We have not sent thee but as a bearer of glad tidings and a Warner for all mankind; but most men know not. And they say, 'When will this promise be fulfilled, if you are truthful?' Say, 'For you is the promise of a day from which you cannot remain behind a single moment

nor can you get ahead of it.

(Ch.34: Vs.29-31)

The expression 'all mankind' here points to the universal and everlasting character of the Message of Islam. It is to be addressed to all nations in all ages. Disbelievers taunt the Prophet^(sa) about the day promised here and ask when it will be; that is, when will the universal and everlasting character of Islam be demonstrated to the world? God says in reply that the day will come as appointed.

The day is referred to also in Ch.32:v.6, thus

He will plan the Divine Ordinance from the heaven unto the earth, then shall it go up to Him in a day the duration of which is a thousand years according to what you reckon.

The thing planned is Islam. In course of time its influence will begin to decline. In a thousand years it will have ascended back to heaven. The special divine support which it enjoyed in the beginning will disappear and its fortunes will be at the mercy of the natural forces of the world. From the Qur'an as

well as the Hadith it appears that the expansion of Islam was to go on for the first three hundred years, after which was to set in the period of its decline. The decline was to go on for one thousand years. Reading together the two passages – 34: 29-31 and 32: 6 – it becomes quite clear that for a long time people would remain unconvinced of the universal and everlasting character of the Message of Islam; but after one thousand three hundred years facts and conditions would emerge which would leave the world in no doubt about it. The passages read together point to the second coming of the Messiah-promised in both the Qur'an and the Hadith-and remind us that the second coming will take place in the person of a follower of the Prophet of Islam^(sa). As the advent of the Promised Messiah would have been prophesied by other Prophets also, his rise from among the followers of the Holy Prophet^(sa) would prove conclusively that the spiritual dominion of the Prophet of Islam^(sa) was everlasting, that there were to be no heavenly Teachers now except from among his followers. The Law and Teaching of the Holy Prophet^(sa) would remain un superseded by any other Law or Teaching. Besides, in

the Promised Messiah's time there was great stress to be laid on the duty of preaching, resulting ultimately in the spread of Islam all over the world. When this happens, the universal and everlasting character of Islam will be established beyond doubt. The everlasting Father of the prophecy of Isaiah, therefore, is the Prophet of Islam^(sa) and none other.

The fifth name in the prophecy is Prince of Peace. Prince also means king; a prince is a potential king. We may, therefore, take the expression to mean King of Peace, and as such it can apply only to the Prophet of Islam^(sa). The religion which he founded is called Islam, which literally means, 'peace'.

We do not know in what sense Jesus^(as) can be regarded as Prince of Peace. At least one meaning of this expression would be that the person so called has an abundance of the quality called peace. Prince of Peace would, therefore, be a person who has peace in his natural gifts and is able to give peace to others. There is no evidence of this in the case of Jesus^(as). He never had the power to administer forgiveness to his enemies. True, he preached forgive-

ness and taught his followers to turn the other cheek. But between profession and performance there is a world of difference, and what is really valuable is performance, not profession. Of this performance, we have evidence only in the Holy Prophet^(sa). How cruelly he was treated by his people. There are no excesses which were not committed against him and his followers. Many among his closest relations and friends were murdered mercilessly. The prophet's own person was a witness to these barbarities. He was their target on many different occasions and in many different ways. He had to leave his home town and seek shelter elsewhere, as had his friends and followers. Almost all of them had to suffer the pangs of separation from their near and dear ones. Some were torn asunder while tied to two camels running in opposite directions. Women were killed by spears thrust in their private parts. Slaves who believed in him were stripped and dragged on burning sand and gravel. They were persecuted and asked to renounce their faith. The bodies of Muslims killed in battle were mutilated. In short, early Muslims—men and women, old and young, dead and living—had to suffer to the

utmost and in a variety of ways. But at last God made them triumphant. The Holy Prophet^(sa), with ten thousand followers, re-entered Mecca as a victor. The cruel enemy was at his feet, thinking no punishment too much for what he had done. Yet all that the Prophet^(sa) said to them was, 'This day, I forgive you all' (Hisham). The Prophet^(sa) had the power to avenge the wrongs done to him and his followers. But he chose to forgive, and to desist even from any injury to their sentiments. When Muslims were advancing towards Mecca, a Muslim general was heard to say that on that day they would repay the Meccans in their own coin (*Bukhari*). The Prophet^(sa) deposed the general, saying that such remarks were calculated to hurt the Meccans. Do we meet with any such thing in the life of Jesus^(as)? Or in the lives of his disciples? Or, in the whole of Christian history? There is no doubt that Christians also suffered much persecution and hardship, and were a weak people. But the time came when they were installed in power. How did they then treat their enemies? Is not history dyed red with the blood of their enemies? How then can Jesus^(as) be called Prince of Peace? He himself could not afford peace to

others. His followers were able to afford it, but did not give it. Instead, they gave death and destruction. The Prophet of Islam^(sa) had the power to punish his enemies for wrongs many times more savage than those perpetrated by Jews against Jesus^(as). Still he chose to forgive. The Prophet^(sa) was, therefore, the Prince of Peace of Isaiah's prophecy.

The seventh sign of the Promised One according to Isaiah (9:7) was:

Of the increase of his government and peace, there shall be no end.

The sign clearly applies to the Prophet of Islam^(sa) and not to Jesus^(as). Jesus^(as) did not attain to any political power. The Prophet^(sa) did, and his followers became rulers of the whole of the then known world; and so well did they rule that it is impossible to find a parallel.

The eighth sign was:

Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgement and with justice from henceforth even for ever.

(9: 7).

Did Jesus^(as) ever ascend the throne of David? It may be he did so three hundred years later, when the Roman Emperor became Christian. But the prophecy lays down that the throne is to be retained for ever. The hold of Jesus^(as) lasted for about three hundred years when it ended with the rise of Islam, and now for one thousand three hundred years, Palestine-the throne of David-has been in the possession of Muslims. What is nearer to the expression 'for ever' in the prophecy three hundred years or one thousand three hundred? No doubt, today a Christian power holds Palestine. But it is significant from our standpoint that the British are there not as rulers but as holders of a mandate. A temporary lapse in the Muslim possession cannot contradict the prophecy.

The rule which the Prophet of Islam^(sa) established in the world through his followers was full of judgement and justice, to use the words of the prophecy. We have historical evidence to prove this. In the time of Umar, the Second Khalifa of Islam, a Muslim army had to withdraw temporarily from Christian territory under the pressure of superior Roman forces.

Before they did, they collected the inhabitants and told them that they could no longer protect their lives and property; so they were returning to them the money they had realised from them as tax. The Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem were so impressed by this singular act of good judgement and justice that they came out with the Muslim army, wailing and praying for the Muslims' speedy return (The Caliphate and Futuh). Little wonder Isaiah^(as) says of the Promised One:

Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgement and with justice.
(9:7)

(e) In Isaiah (19: 21-25) we have:

And the Lord shall be known to Egypt, and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day; and shall do sacrifice and oblation; yea, they shall vow a vow unto the Lord, and perform it. And the Lord shall smite Egypt: he shall smite and heal it; and they shall return even to the Lord, and he shall be intreated of them, and shall heal them. In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt

to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land; whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance.

This prophecy speaks of a time when God would manifest Himself to the people of Egypt who would, therefore, come to know Him and would make sacrifices and offerings to Him; Egypt and Syria would unite, the inhabitants of each would visit the other; and both would join in a common form of worship.

This prophecy also was fulfilled in the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa). The people of Egypt did become Christian, but only for a short time of their history. Now for one thousand three hundred years Egyptians have been Muslims. In the words of Isaiah^(as), God says to the Egyptians: 'Blessed be Egypt, my people.' Let the Egyptians speak for themselves. Do they owe

allegiance to Jesus^(as) or to the Prophet of Islam^(sa)?

We then have:

'And Assyria the work of my hands.'

Similarly let the Assyrians speak for themselves. Do they attribute themselves to Jesus^(as) or the Prophet of Islam^(sa)?

And we have:

'And Israel mine inheritance.'

Who holds Palestine, the land of Israel?

No doubt, under European and American influence Jews are entering Palestine. But the Jews are not the followers of Jesus^(as). And in any case Muslims still form a majority in this land of Israel, and Christians still a minority. If Jews take possession of the land it will only mean a temporary lapse in the Muslim possession, and whether it is Jews or Muslims who possess the land, Jesus^(as) can have no claim on the prophecy.

The prophecy speaks of 'a highway

out of Egypt into Assyria', i.e., a sign of active contact between the two countries. The prophecy pictures the inhabitants of the two countries visiting and befriending each other and joining in a common mode of worship. Who brought all this about; was it Jesus^(as)? Christians were in possession of both Egypt and Assyria and a majority of the inhabitants of these countries, at one time, were Christian. But during this time, did the conditions arise of which the prophecy speaks? According to the prophecy the two countries were to develop such intimate contact that for all practical purposes they were to become one people, with one language and one faith. Some contact between – two neighbouring countries is normal and natural. But the contact between Egypt and Assyria was to be different; it was to result in welding two peoples into one, and to give them a common nationality. Such a fusion between the two never occurred in the time of Christian rule. Under Rome, Egypt and Syria were parts of the same empire, but the mode of administration in the two countries remained different. Egypt was a semi-independent kingdom, and Assyria was under a Roman

Governor. The Egyptian Church also was different from the Assyrian Church. In Egypt, under the influence of the Alexandrian Church, Christianity had assumed a form different from that of the Palestinian or Syrian Church. The Egyptians worshipped in their own language, Coptic, and Syrians in a corrupt mixture of Hebrew and Greek. Under Islam conditions became quite different. For centuries Egypt and Syria remained under one rule. Both began to speak and still speak one language. Both adopted and still keep up a common mode of worship. Both developed a common consciousness. Syrian scholars went to Egypt and were honoured as Egyptian savants. Egyptian scholars went to Syria and were honoured as Syrian savants. Even today, while the Muslim world under European diplomacy lies dismembered, the Arab League is a united body of Egyptians, Syrians and Palestinians. The three seem to share and to be proud of a common nationality. This prophecy of Isaiah^(as), therefore, was fulfilled in and through the Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa) and his followers. To apply this to Jesus^(as) and the Christian Church seems utter extravagance.

In Isaiah (62:2) we have:

And thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.

Quite evidently, the prophecy foretells of a new movement, with a new name, and the new name will not be one assumed by the movement, but one proposed for it by God in His revealed word. Annotators of the Bible apply this – prophecy to the Christian Church, notwithstanding the common knowledge that the names Christian and Christianity, or the many names by which Christian sects are known, were never proposed by God in His revealed word but were assumed by the people. There is one people alone in all the world who have a name given to them by God, and they are Muslims. Thus the Qur'an says:

He named you Muslims both before and in this Book.
(22: 79).

This is a clear reference to the prophecies of Isaiah^(as). The verse of the Qur'an seems to say, 'We foretold that your name will not be one of your choice but one of Our

choice. Accordingly, today, We give you the name-Muslim.' The name is derived from salim which means Peace, and this is in keeping with one of the titles of the Promised Prophet – 'Prince of Peace'. The prophecy was marvellous. Equally marvellous is the fact that only Muslims claim to have received their name from God in His own revealed word. Isaiah foretold that a Prophet would come the name of whose followers would be chosen by God and announced in His revealed word. The Holy Prophet of Islam^(sa) is that Prophet; his followers have been named Muslims by God, and his religion Islam.



To be continued

European Philosophy

This is an extract taken from the book Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth, written by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad.

When the sun of secular enlightenment finally set upon Andalusia, its radiant face rose from the horizon of France to smile upon what lay of Europe beyond. It lit up the entire continent from south to north, and from east to west. A glorious day of knowledge broke which was to dominate Europe for centuries to come. The age of the Renaissance had begun.

But few in Europe realize today how much they owe to Muslim Spain for that great dawn of enlightenment called the Renaissance. Many outstanding philosophers, mathematicians, scientists, astronomers and physicians from Andalusia are but obliterated memories for Europe, buried in the forlorn graveyards of oblivion.

With the dawn of the Renaissance as the darkness was dispelled, reason and rationality began to dispossess the blind faith of the territories which it had long held under its mighty sway. To keep a balance between the secular philosophies on the one hand, and faith and belief on the other was not an easy task. It was no trivial challenge for the priest-ridden society of that age to defend their faith against the new philosophical invasion by reason and rationality. They had inherited an image of Christianity which largely under Pauline influence had disintegrated into mythical dogmas. It was no longer the same Divine light which had illuminated Christ.

Even before the Renaissance, some European intellectuals had attempted to maintain a balance between reason and faith. E.J. Scotus in the ninth century AD had set the noble example of bringing about a measure of truce between faith and reason. He maintained that truth cannot be reached through reason alone, but reason and faith had a part to play together. He suggested that in the beginning religious beliefs were founded on rational grounds. Convictions cannot be born out of mere conjectures. There has to be some logical basis for the building of convictions. Whether it is done advertently or inadvertently, for every conviction, as it is born, there has to be some rational basis. In short, Scotus believed that true faith should not be equated with myth. It should be understood to have been founded on some solid, rational platform. In the beginning when faith took root in the human mind, it could not have happened without some reason and logic to support it, he assumed. Yet with the passage of

time, that link must have faded out and was no longer observable. From then on faith appeared to be suspended in mid-air without the pillars of reason to support it. Yet its firmness and tenacity which have stood the test of time are indicative that it could not have reached this high level of conviction altogether without reason or logic.

In conclusion, Scotus advises that the validity of one's faith should be examined from time to time according to the dictates of rationality. If the two appear to be conflicting then one must follow reason. Thus reason will always hold an edge over faith.

This attitude is best illustrated in Newton's (1642-1727) treatment of the Trinity. As long as he did not consciously and scientifically examine his inherited religious views, he continued to remain a devotee of the doctrine. But when at a later stage he decided to put his faith to the test of reason and rationality, he was left with no option but to reject the dogma of Trinity which in his view had failed the test of reason.

Thus he became the all-time greatest victim of the prejudices of the Christian church sacrificed at the altar of the cross. As a tribute to the genius of Newton, he was elected as a Fellow of the 'College of the Holy and Undivided Trinity', University of Cambridge, a post which he held for many years. In 1675 however, he was given the choice to either vacate his seat and keep his convictions, or to compromise his convictions and assert his orthodoxy under oath one last time in ordination.

But the 'Holy and Undivided Trinity' itself stood in his way. His stubborn refusal to subscribe to the doctrine of Trinity cost him not only his fellowship, but also the handsome stipend of £60 a year. No small amount indeed, judging by the value of money in those days. He was dispossessed of his fellowship and chair from the university on the charge of heresy. The charge of heresy was levelled against him only because in Newton's eyes worshipping Christ was idolatry, to him a fundamental sin. R.S. Westfall writes on Newton:

'He recognized Christ as a divine mediator between God and humankind, who was subordinate to the Father who created him.'¹

'The conviction began to possess him that a massive fraud, which began in the fourth and fifth centuries, had perverted the legacy of the early church. Central to the fraud were the Scriptures, which Newton began to believe had been corrupted to support trinitarianism. It is impossible to say exactly when the conviction fastened upon him. The original notes themselves testify to

earlier doubts. Far from silencing the doubts, he let them possess him.'²

Hence, his faith in the Unity of God and rejection of the Trinity was based on his unbiased, honest investigation into the validity of Christian beliefs. There is many a note written in his own hand on the margins of his personal Bible:

'Therefore the Father is God of the Son (when the Son is considered) as God.'³

Thus concludes Westfall:

'... almost the first fruit of Newton's theological study was doubt about the status of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity.'³

When during the Renaissance interest was renewed in this age-old question of faith versus rationality on a wider basis, it fell to the lot of Rene Descartes (1596-1650) to keep the flag of belief held high. The issue with him was not Christianity versus reason, it was a more straightforward issue of belief in the existence of God in an age of philosophical wanderings of the mind.

An exceptionally clear-headed logician as he was, he not only believed in God but was the first amongst the philosophers to boldly take up the issue of reason, leading to God. Fortunately for him, he refused to be drawn into a debate on the rationale of Trinity. What he proved was simply the existence of one Supreme Being. Perhaps it was this rejection on his part of the then prevalent Christian dogma, which lost him an honourable place among the believing intellectuals of that age. J. Gutman explains this situation in his book *Philosophy*⁴. Here Descartes is not mentioned as a revelational theist, which he was, but he is merely spoken of as one who is purported to be a revelational theist. This treatment was meted out to him entirely because of his rationalistic disregard for Christianity's distinctiveness.

Unfortunately, a rebellion against God, as such, did not hurt the sensibility of the Christian priests as much as the public denouncement of Christianity. It is a great tragedy that a philosopher and a mathematician of such an exceptionally high status as Descartes was not paid the homage due to him. It should be remembered that he was not merely a theoretical philosopher, he was also an outstanding geometrist who took the work of Pythagoras (c. 580-500 BC) on geometry to such heights as it had never scaled before. His solid contribution to geometry which comprised many pioneering works will always be remembered with heads bowed to his greatness.

Another mark of his greatness lies in the fact that he was the first to introduce the trend of mathematical argumentation into philosophy. His concept of truth and absoluteness begins with his journey of self-consciousness. His test of truth is related to the first impression one receives after hearing or observing something. He asserted that anything which fails to pass the criterion of truth immediately is worthy of doubt. In other words, anything one could believe to be true without any dialectical argumentation was acceptable as evident truth. Applying this logic to self-consciousness, the following is a paraphrase of his argument: because I think I am – and I accept this simple statement without supporting it with any logical deduction – so most certainly I am.

As such this becomes the first and the prime evident truth. A simple and charming phrase he coined in this regard was *Cogito, ergo sum* meaning ‘I think, therefore I am.’⁵ The second truth which he recognised after the first truth was the truth of the existence of God. He mathematically calculated that the very idea of such an existence was enough evidence of His existence just as the sum of the three angles of a triangle are most certainly equal to the sum of two right angles.

Whether his philosophical proof of the existence of God was acceptable or not to the generations of philosophers who followed him, at least they were all profoundly influenced by him. Thus, in the subsequent generations of thinkers, logic was freely employed for or against the belief in the existence of God. Dialectical materialism was also born as a subsequent development of the same trend.

This line of thinking continued into the seventeenth century when John Locke, Berkeley and Hume demarcated the boundary of phenomenon and reason as having no common borders with faith and belief. While subscribing to this philosophy, Locke did not specifically rule out the validity of faith and belief but left them alone for the believers to have faith in whatever way they chose. It was left to a later generation of European philosophers to deny the existence of God on the basis of logic – Rousseau and Nietzsche being most prominent among them.

Nietzsche declared God to be dead in his own dramatic style. Rousseau, on his part, advocated the synthesis of a new religion in place of revealed religions. He stressed the need for a religion based on a study of human nature and human experiences. He proposed that the human mind itself should create a civic code or rule of life. Rousseau seems to be among the first of the European philosophers who openly rebelled against the philosophy to have anything to do with the belief in God. It was an age when religion was profoundly and advertently affected by the rationalist movement.

This generation of philosophers was followed by Utilitarians like Mill and Sidgwick. Essentially they believed in the choice of advantage. Whatever was to one's advantage, one should have free unrestrained access to it. But when it came to a clash between egoism and altruism they advised recourse to reason for arbitration between them.

This means that during the pursuit of pleasure when it comes to making a choice between extreme selfishness and selfless sacrifice of one's own interest, reason should arbitrate between the two. A verbose philosophy indeed, meaning nothing in substance. Those given to pleasure would hardly need advice from Bentham, Mill, Sidgwick etc. to stop short at the border of moderation and desist from leaping into the domain of utter selfishness. For them the choice between egoism and altruism would be out of the question. Who would stand in need of arbitration of reason in the area of his sensual desires? A person given to lustful and carnal pleasures needs no counsel. He pursues this course knowing full well the pros and cons of it.

The utilitarians were followed by a generation of philosophers, who left a deep mark on the history of European philosophy. Locke, Berkeley and Hume known as Empiricists stand at the head of the movement. Many a generation of philosophers was to be influenced by them. Their philosophy can be summed up in the simple statement: one should believe only in the conclusion drawn from experimental observation which is demonstrable. They believed that only pure reason and signs gave birth to ideas which were worthy of acceptance – the ideas which could be retried through scientific experimentation with unfailing consistency. A better definition of science cannot be visualized.

Hume was followed by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) who was deeply stirred and influenced by Hume's realistic philosophy. Hence the realism of Kant owes much to the empiricism of Hume. Agnostic as he was, he was wise enough to realise the indispensability of morality. He was perhaps the pioneer in the suggestion that morality should be deduced from reason alone. He divided reality into phenomenal reality and noumenal reality. He believed that scientific investigation cannot go beyond phenomenon. As such he ruled out that the existence of God could be proved through the instrument of phenomenal investigation. His system is usually referred to as a transcendental idealism.

This in turn gave birth to Hegel's absolute idealism. Many a new phrase was coined during this prolific period of the growth of his philosophy, such as the logical positivism, existentialism and objectivism. Yet no new dramatic chapter was added

to the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle, who reigned supreme as the undisputed masters till the end of time. Even the smart clichés of dialectical materialism and scientific socialism were but other names for what we find freely discussed in the works of Aristotle. It should not be forgotten however, that the European philosophers were no less indebted to their Muslim forerunners of Andalusia and Baghdad, than they were to their Greek masters. This was the period when Hegel's absolute idealism ruled supreme. Yet most of the Europeans little realised the fact that it was no more than the continuity of the idealism of Plato. If we understand Hegel correctly, for him subjectivism was inseparably related to the outside realities. This means that he did not deny objective realities altogether, but laid emphasis on the supremacy of ideas.

In the Islamic school of thought, the objectivist Sufis were a different tale altogether. They carried their subjectivism to such dizzy heights as the European philosophers could not have dreamt of. These Sufis could as well be referred to as illusionists.

As far as the issue of revelation leading to knowledge is concerned, no such discussion is found in the works of European philosophers of any generations. Among the believers in the existence of God, Descartes continued to hold fast to his belief that reason must be placed before faith. He believed in God because his reason supported his belief, hence there was no contradiction in him. Voltaire and Thomas Paine maintained that in the development of human civilization, reason had played a far more significant role than faith. In metaphysical philosophy, abstract forms of existence beyond the material world have been the subject of discussion, but the question of revelation has never been examined with any seriousness.

Despite the philosophical interest of that age, in judging the comparative merits of faith versus rationality, they somehow remained silent on the issue of revelation having played any part in leading man to truth and knowledge. At best, their interest remained revolving around the existence of God, only philosophically. No quest was ever made to find out any traces of evidence in the universe which could lead to the proof of His existence. The validity of revelation from on high was never examined seriously. By comparison, the modern attempts to trace messages from aliens are taken far more seriously. Such attempts are already institutionalised and funded by great world powers.

As we get closer to the modern period, from the time of Bentham, Mill and Sidgwick we find an ever increasing reliance on rationality, while faith is gradually waived to a position of lesser significance. The ultimate victim of this emphasis on rationality

has been the belief in God. Thus, rationality gained dominance slowly and gradually, like the appearance of a long, northerly dawn interrupted only by an occasional flurry of aurora.

The rationalists gave preference to reason over all other means of attaining knowledge and truth. Yet among the rationalists too, we find both believers in Christianity as well as non-believers. It was the latter, however, who consistently gained the upper hand. During the age of rationalism, the Church had to defend Christianity somehow with whatever logical arguments it could muster. But this proved a strategic mistake on its part, to be lured into the battleground of reason and rationality.

The most prominent theists of this period were Kierkegaard, Jaspers and Marcel. Of them, it was Kierkegaard who first rang the bell of alarm warning the Church not to commit suicide by entering the arena of logical debate between faith and reason. Referring to Kierkegaard's efforts to salvage faith from the onslaught of reason, Coppleston writes in 'Contemporary Philosophy':

'For Kierkegaard, however, this procedure was simply a dishonest betrayal of Christianity. The Hegelian dialectic is an enemy within the gates; and it is not the business of any Christian writer or preacher to dilute Christianity to suit the general educated public. The doctrine of the Incarnation was to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the Greeks foolishness, and so will it always be. For the doctrine not only transcends reason but is repugnant to reason: it is the Paradox par excellence, and it can be affirmed only by faith, with passionate inwardness and interest. The substitution of reason for faith means the death of Christianity.'⁶

What Kierkegaard did not further elaborate was that the converse was also true. It nearly implied that the Christian faith was completely empty of reason and rationality. It could be adhered to only if one withdraws into the shell of obstinate rejection of reason. The moment the tortoise dares to stick his neck out, his head would be plucked by rationality, waiting for just such an opportunity. Yet Kierkegaard believed that he could keep both his Christianity and reason simultaneously. Perhaps he knew how to have his cake and eat it too!

Berkeley and Hegel remained consistently adamant that reason must be given preference over sensory experience. God to them was mainly a description invented to fill a void for a logical gap. Thus the debate continued to rage among the believing

European philosophers and the non-believing ones. It raged on, until its fire was extinguished by burning itself out. All that was left, were the ashes of faith in caskets of agnosticism and atheism.

As for the believing Jewish philosophers, their strategy was much less vulnerable. They believed in the historicity of their faith. The victorious past of Judaism over its Gentile antagonists was sufficient for them to keep their cinders alive. To debate the issue between faith on the one side and reason on the other, was just irrelevant.

Among the atheists, Nietzsche, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty, Camus and Marx were a category in themselves. None believed in generalisations. As such, it was not possible for them to universalise subjectivity. The subjective experience of each person has a uniqueness about it which cannot be exactly shared by others.

We believe that here it is important to devote a subsection to Marxism. However much we may differ with this philosophy, it cannot be denied that it has universally earned for itself a permanent place which will always be treated with respect by an enormously large number of people all over the world.

Marx (1818-1883), among the theist philosophers of the nineteenth century, should be treated separately in his own right. To him the denial of God is not merely incidental, it is an integral component of his philosophy, with which religion is absolutely incompatible. With him, humans are like elements interacting with each other under the socio-economic laws which govern them. They must be set free from the religious interference which distracts their natural course. To Marx, revelation and inspiration lie beyond the vocabulary of philosophical thought.

Next to him is Nietzsche, with his own special domineering personality. His sabre-like pen impales God as his prime victim, until he pronounces Him dead; or, so he thought. In fact he knew no God, other than the God of the Christian dogma and it was Him that his sword of reason had murdered. Thus, Kierkegaard is proved so right in his warning to the priests to maintain a sullen silence about the divine mystery of Trinity; rather than invite trouble by venturing to defend it with instruments of reason.

Most of the atheist European philosophers of that age were, in fact, driven to the denial of God largely by the Christian Church, which had mystified God's image to the extent of absurdity. Among other atheist philosophers, Sartre (1905-1980) is perhaps the most interesting and playful. He knows how to coin simple phrases with

profound ideas. At the helplessness of man in his freedom to shift for himself in a Godless universe, he exclaims:

‘... man is condemned to be free.’⁷

By this he means that the responsibility to make choices for himself, which lies on every human shoulder, is a challenge extremely difficult to meet. There is no one else to help him or guide his steps in the dreary wilderness of existence. Commenting on the episode of Abraham^(as), he explains the presence of angels as a psychic phenomenon. To him, that Divine revelation which the angels brought to Abraham^(as), was no more than the anguish of his soul. Wrong as we may consider Sartre's explanation, we must pay homage to his fiery outburst of desperation and vengefulness. This applies far more befittingly to Sartre himself who may have suffered pangs of anguish and exasperation in the emptiness of his Godless philosophy. Revelation is the anguish of the soul, is indeed a profoundly revealing statement from the vantage point of an atheist – if atheists ever admit to possessing souls. Bernard Shaw is close to Sartre, but not quite, when he defines revelation as ‘inner voices’ – at best, a smart remark of a dramatist lacking the depth and force of Sartre's reflection! All said and done, Sartre fails to distinguish between inspiration and revelation, terms that simply do not exist in his philosophy; what does exist is the agony of soul – a tongue of fire that leaps out in occasional outbursts of desperation. No revelation descends from on high, whatever rises, rises from the depth of human frustration.

Hegel (1770-1831) is another agnostic whose interest in denial is not as strong and committed. His philosophy is not directly related to religious issues. Among his outstanding contributions is his attempt to create a bridge between subjectivity and objectivity.

It was he who first presented the dialectical conflict between the ideas of one generation and the ideas of the following generation. This is the well-known Hegelian theory of dialectical struggle between thesis and anti-thesis. He simply believed in contrariety of ideas. This means that ideas which are contrary to each other, but not contradictory, are constantly locked in a dialectical struggle for supremacy.

This results in his thesis that superior ideas are inevitably born out of the preceding dialectical processes. This in turn results in the birth of another anti-thesis born out of the preceding theses. Thus it goes on and on until a stabilised thesis is ultimately

reached which demonstrates a positive and lasting understanding of the nature of objective reality.

He used this method to establish the role of logic for attaining knowledge. However, this dialectical method of reaching truth is only possible within systems that are factual and not abstract. The final outcome of this struggle of ideas is what he referred to as the absolute idea. This was Hegel's concept of ultimate reality on universal truth. To him history is nothing but the movement of thought, the integration of theses and anti-theses into syntheses. In Lenin's words Hegel believed that:

'Life gives rise to the brain. Nature is reflected in the human brain. By checking and applying the correctness of these reflections in his practice and technique, man arrives at objective truth.'⁸

For him any ideological theory that was not related to the realm of physical experience was not worthy of serious consideration. Thus, any discussion of its significance was only of academic interest.

Implementing Hegel's philosophy, it was Marx who experimented on giving man a new code of life based purely on man's reasoning. A purely secular exercise to begin with, it soon began to demand respect from society. A sort of man-made politico-economic religion was born, founded on the denial of God. Marxist scholars were in basic agreement with the Hegelian point of view, and rejected the notion of eternal truth. They did not accept the objective truth to be absolute. It was always relative to a particular time and circumstance. Among the socialist thinkers, Engels accepted the idea of absolute truth, and thus met with Bogdanov's disapproval. By and large, to the Communist philosophers, truth is the name of knowledge obtained by objective study, subject to a given time and state of affairs. Within these specifics, truth is knowledge and knowledge is truth. As such, knowledge could be defined as a constantly changing objective truth, corresponding to environments.

It did not take long before this materialist philosophy turned into an ordained way of life. Marx became the chief apostle of this Godless religion as well as its oracle. To him we must turn now for an in-depth study because it was the stupendous power of his idea and not the mere mechanism of dialectical materialism which was to change the face of the earth.

In the spectrum of conflict of human ideas and beliefs, religion stands at one extreme, with its emphasis on the role of revelation as the most valid guiding principle. Marxism stands at the other end with its total denial of revealed truth. Between these two occur various philosophies – some closer to one, some to the other. But negation of all that religion stands for is never found so total and absolute anywhere except in the Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism and scientific socialism.

Marx, among all the European philosophers, seems to be the most clear-headed, matter-of-fact, yet idealistic without confessing his idealism – extremely cunning in his ever-changing philosophical strategy against God and religion. To him neither God nor revelation mean anything, so also, inspiration has no place in his philosophy. He would not agree with Hegel's idealism which precedes objective realities and participates in their activation.

In Hegel's philosophy, the idea is born first and material changes are brought about later under its influence. Thus, when they grow to a certain stage of maturity and become pregnant with new ideas, they in their turn are subjected to new trials of verification. Thus they move on, wave after wave, transferring the subjective realities into observable, demonstrable objective truths.

Marx is clever enough to suspect the tiger in the bush. If the subjective ideas turn into objective realities as Hegelian philosophy would require, then the subjective ideas must precede the objective reality. This would create a dangerous cause and effect chain. Ideas must require a preceding consciousness which cannot be conceived without life. As such, this would ultimately lead to God, as the Prime Mover, who can bring about objective changes with the instrument of idea. Perhaps it is for this reason that Marx does not openly subscribe to the Hegelian idealism. Yet, with a subtle twist in the sequence of cause and effect, he transforms Hegelian philosophy into that of his own. He puts matter before the idea. This dialectical struggle does not begin with ideas, but with matter which is governed by autonomous natural laws. As such, dialectical materialism must reach its logical conclusion, with or without the help of ideas. Sheer matter will carve its own course by working upon life and shaping its destiny. This philosophy preconceives the non-existence of God, Who has to be dislodged from the driving seat of human affairs. It is only man who is entitled to take command of his own affairs with full responsibility.

Thus Marx's dependence on reason and logic is as total as his rejection of God and

Divine revelation. Absolute idealism versus dialectical materialism are but questions of arrangement. Which precedes which, is the only issue to be determined.

This leads us to another important question which, when properly resolved, will help us better understand Marx's hidden intentions. How could he ever envision the smooth and flawless working of any system without morality? He was far too intelligent to miss the point, but he was also intelligent enough to be able to perceive the link between morality and God. Man by nature is not a moral animal. On the contrary he is the most corrupt animal under the firmament of heaven. All attempts to make man moral emanate from a belief in God, but Marx knew full well that belief in God was incompatible with his philosophy. Everything that leads or may lead to God was taboo. He had to choose between the two options: either to promote morality within Communism to safeguard its interest and run the risk of leading the Communist world back to God, or to shun the risk and accept instead the possible threat to the system itself. Perhaps he hoped that the impending terror of punishment would adequately offset the absence of moral training among the custodians of Communist rule.

In this, however, he has been proved utterly wrong. Man is a corrupt animal, corrupt indeed even beyond the reach of the merciless retribution of a totalitarian regime to straighten him.

The Marxist philosophy of dialectical materialism leaves no room for God. It was for the same reason that Lenin launched a fierce campaign against those who dared to plead the cause of morality albeit within the framework of Communism.

So in Marxism there is neither room for revelation from on high, nor for any code of ethics based on revelation. Marx must have deemed it essential to banish morality from human affairs because of its implied potential to lead to God.

Another potent reason why he may have rejected morality could be the fear that morality would stand in the way of uninhibited proletarian revolution. The proletariat were tied to their bourgeois masters, in the name of moral obligation. Such ties must be shattered and the masses must be set free to do whatever they could to rebel against their despotic usurpers. No moral obligation must be permitted to stand in the way. They should feel free to kill, murder, rob, burn and destroy to annihilate the bourgeois order of economic and political domination. Thus he perceived morality as an arch-enemy of his Godless system.

Despite this matter-of-fact level-headedness of Marx, he is still full of inconsistencies. He lays the foundation for his projected ideas so soundly and firmly on reason and analysis, that it is hard indeed to suspect him of the crime of inherent contradictions. Yet contradictions run deep in Marxism. The total rejection of morality on the one hand, and the launching of a revolutionary movement founded entirely on the moral phenomenon of sympathy, on the other, is one such example of inconsistency.

But that is not all. The sympathy for the cause of the miserable, if carried beyond all boundaries of justice and fair play leading to cruelty to others, is where the contradiction becomes more glaring. If there is no justice in human affairs and you start a movement in the name of justice to rehabilitate it, you cannot violate the very principle upon which your movement is resting. It would be like severing the very bough upon which one is perched.

Again, an advocate of a system which holds no brief for sentiments and moral considerations, seems at odds with himself when he expects total commitment of loyalty to a system which is essentially amoral. There is another contradiction in Marx which lies in his well-calculated and well-planned scheme to help the proletariat topple the despotic domination of the bourgeoisie. Call it scientific socialism or dialectical materialism, if this philosophy is correct then it should not require any outside assistance of humans manipulating and guiding its steps.

Another important point to be observed is that Marx's dialectical materialism was clearly influenced by Darwin's monumental work *The Origin of Species*. In fact, a deeper study reveals that dialectical materialism is merely another name for Darwin's struggle for existence, extended into human affairs.

The supply of food and means of sustenance continue to dominate the life of *Homo sapiens* as they had ever dominated the earlier animal species before man. The same principle of the survival of the fittest continues to operate as it ever operated before. There is no choice or option for life to take a different course, other than the one dictated by this law. This is scientific. If Marxist philosophy does not possess this equality of finality and precision, then his doctrine cannot be entitled as scientific. Dialectical materialism would lose its significance as an inevitable natural phenomenon.

Examine now how different the case of Darwinian evolution is from that of dialectical materialism. The Darwinian principle of evolution predominates

everything else in shaping life and carving its path. It needs no ideological campaign in its favour or external assistance to advance its cause. On the contrary, it has the potential to frustrate and destroy any outside attempt to obstruct its passage. If Darwin had not been born, if none had unravelled the mystery of evolution, the reality of evolution would have remained unchanged. The absence of Darwin could not make the smallest dent upon its inevitability.

The laws of nature do not depend upon the human understanding of their implementation. The perception of man has no part to play in the reality of their existence. Whether anyone understands them or not, the gigantic wheel of nature would continue to roll on.

How different is the case of dialectical materialism! Had Marx and Lenin not been born, a Communist revolution in Russia or anywhere else in the world could not have taken place. At that point in Russian history, She was ripe for revolution with or without Lenin. The only difference that Lenin made was to ride the crest of the imminent storm when it broke loose, and exploited it to the advantage of scientific socialism. In the case of the Darwinian precept of evolution however, no advocate is ever needed to further its cause, no designer is required to assist the process of natural history.

When we compare Hegel's philosophy with that of Marx, the central question which emerges is this: Do ideas precede objective changes in the material world, or is it the objective changes themselves which give birth to ideas as they roll on? If Marx is right, then he need not have launched an intellectual and idealistic campaign to bring about a Communist revolution. Anything contrary to the inevitable scientific conclusion could not have taken place.

If Communism were indeed a law unto itself like the law of evolution, then even the most powerful ideas together would not have impeded the advance of Communism even if they had colluded to do so. Here is the case of another contradiction in Marx. Apparently he pleads in the precedence of dialectical materialism over the idea, but in practice he leans entirely upon the power of idea to make it work.

If his vision were based on sound scientific principles, then it would bring about the inevitable transfer of economic and political power from the hands of a few to the hands of the numerous, as its logical conclusion. But the circumstances which created Marx and which created Lenin have no inevitability about them. For Marx, to have been born with just the right faculties of head and heart and to win the

support of a highly intellectual, influential and wealthy friend like Engels was not a natural outcome of dialectical materialism.

Again, his failure to bring about such a revolution in Germany, which according to his philosophy was an ideal arena with all the factors present to bring about a proletariat revolution, is proof enough that dialectical materialism by itself was not sufficient to change the political and economic face of the world.

The success of Lenin on the other hand, in a comparatively much less industrialised country than Germany, is yet another proof to support the proposition that the Russian revolution was merely coincidental and not a direct consequence of Marxism. It was a misfortune of Russian history that Lenin was available during that critical period when reaction to the Tsar's despotic, selfish and evil rule, coupled with the frustration of defeat in the First World War, created the opportune moment for Lenin to pounce upon.

Russia was ripe for revolution anyway. Indeed, Russia was ripe for any revolution. Had it not been the Communist revolution, it could have been any other. All that was needed was a leader of Lenin's status. It was a mere accident that in Lenin, Russia found the revolutionary leader who happened to be a scientific socialist pupil of Marx. He, who condemns exploitation in severest terms emerges himself as the worst exploiter of Russian History. It was Lenin who dictated history in Russia and not dialectical materialism.

Apart from contradictions, Marx can also be blamed for at least one gross omission – his science of socialism completely ignores the factor of the mind from its computations.

Mind is the seat of ideas which has its own distinct identity apart from that of the brain. The brain is the material abode of mind, but the mind which occupies and dwells in the abode is not material. If the brain can be likened unto a computer, then the mind could be conceived as its operator. A clever idea is born when the mind manipulates the computer brain. Even if any two material brains were to be one hundred per cent alike, if different minds operated them, the ideas thus born out of them will not be identical.

All the human scientific, social, economic and political progress is taking shape under the sway of the mind. The powerful nations of the world exercise their authority over the weaker nations merely because of their accumulated superior power of the mind. It is the same resources of the mind at the disposal of the

bourgeoisie which make them most formidable in their absolute command of power. The doctrine of dialectical materialism however, does not take this most powerful factor into account.

It was a mistake on the part of Marx, to believe that the accumulated wealth in a capitalist system is the sum total of conserved labour which the capitalists exploited. This conserved energy, he believed, comes from the unpaid dues of the exploited labour and the interest accrued from the idle capital deposited in the banks. Thus the proletariat majority is robbed by the bourgeois few. But sheer labour in itself cannot accumulate wealth without being wedded to the superior power of the mind. This in fact is conveniently ignored by Marx. The progressive scientific inventions which have revolutionised the input-output ratio of labour versus production are essentially the product of mind.

The labour in many a third world country continues to toil and sweat, yet their output is nothing compared to that of the labour in the highly developed industrial countries. Superior tools and highly mechanised productive units and modern technology, when wedded to labour, make all the difference. It is this superior potential achieved with the faculty of the mind which enhances productivity. Otherwise, labour is labour, whether in England or in Bangladesh, in the Pacific Islands or the African jungles; why then is some labour rewarded far more than the labour employed elsewhere? Evidently, it is the mind which plays a decisive role in this unequal reward. It should be remembered here that the power of the mind is a natural factor which can be played for good or evil depending on who employs it.

As labour aided by the mind becomes far more productive, so also is the case of capitalism which when rightly aided by superior mind becomes formidable. This power of capitalism does not flow automatically from the accumulation of wealth into fewer hands. The accumulation of wealth in fewer hands can only be made possible if the power of the mind is working on its side. If the power of the mind is evil Mafias will begin to be created. Against such Mafias the entire might of the proletariat will stand no chance of succeeding.

The number of such Mafias, once begun, forever multiplies extending their domain over every territory of human interests. In due time, they become ever more powerful, dictating terms to the high and low alike. In finance, in commerce, in politics, in business, in the pleasure industry, in health and in sickness, in the progressively expanding travel industry, in computers and electronics, everywhere, these Mafias will cast their evergrowing and deepening ominous shadows.

Hence it is the power of the mind, good or bad which ultimately governs the material world. The mechanism of dialectical materialism has no dominant role to play in shaping the destiny of man. Alas, the mind which has emerged to control world affairs is evil – an inevitable consequence of the rejection of God.

It is not a distinctive feature of Marxism alone that morality is denied any role in human affairs. That which Communists do openly, the capitalists do with a masterly hypocrisy. Their politics, trade and economics are no less devoid of morality, rendering them equal partners in crime with their counterparts across the border. The chance, that the proletariat in Communist states stand against their oppressors is as little as the one enjoyed by the multitudes in the capitalist world.

The Mafias created by power of evil minds in capitalism are no less horrendous than the ones operating among the Communist world when the helpless have-nots cross the path of their ruling class. It is this factor upon which we must concentrate now. Why should the erstwhile have-nots of a Communist hierarchy suddenly forget about all their miseries and suffering of the past, and begin to command the destiny of the masses with stony hearts and iron claws? What morals would govern them? What pangs of conscience would reproach them? When there is no morality, there are no pangs of conscience. It is this heartless mechanism of a merciless system in operation which is responsible for the ultimate failure of Communism.

A deep, careful examination of all absolute regimes would reveal a strange inherent paradox. It makes no difference whether they are built around a totalitarian philosophy of Communism or Fascism, or emerge as a dictatorial expression of power by a capitalist despot. They all have one thing in common: they cannot afford to be moral, because without merciless oppression they cannot survive, and morality cannot coexist with cruelty. Thus they thrive on the absence of morality, yet it is the very same absence of morality which brings about their ultimate downfall.

Mere ruthlessness is not sufficient to protect any totalitarian or despotic regimes. The power of cunning, scheming, plotting, conspiring minds is no less essential for their survival than ruthlessness is. It is the unholy wedlock between corrupt minds and merciless hearts which gives birth to all dictatorial regimes. It helps them to survive for a while but always deserts them in the end. The same factors of conspiracy and moral destitution become the ultimate cause of their downfall. In fact nothing good or bad happens in human affairs as a result of an inevitable inbred system. The two most important factors which shape human destiny are the factor of mind and the factor of morality. Their strength or weakness, their virtue or vice,

decide the fate of every man-made plan. Hence, Marx is wrong on both counts. Remove the factors of mind and morality from scientific socialism and what is left is neither scientific nor social. The proletariat, however massive they may swell, are no match whatsoever when confronted with the united might of evil minds. Woe for the age when the might of evil mind colludes with his ego to rule the world. Hence little difference would it make whether the world were ruled by the mindless, amoral mechanism of materialism, or by the evil-minded immoral Mafia of capitalism. Yet there is a difference, and a vast difference for that matter which exposes the inadequacies and inherent flaws of Marxism. In capitalism there is always a measure of freedom which every individual of the society enjoys. It is this freedom which promotes the ultimate cause of the whole society as such. There is no freedom in Communism. An ever-increasing depression of gloominess continues to grow and penetrates every fibre of Communist society. It depresses all their potentials except in the areas where the state itself is compelled to promote them.

Another dilemma which Marxism faces is that morality cannot be defined in partisan terms. A society which is taught and trained in rejecting all moral obligations with respect to others, is very unlikely to fulfil its obligations to itself. Once given to immorality, always given to immorality, is the general pattern of human behaviour. The same applies to the Communist command system. Immorality seems to strengthen the grip of the corrupt upon the system which they operate. The more corrupt they become, the more callous and merciless they must grow to perpetuate their command.

Morality and immorality cannot be channelled exclusively in any single direction. It is not possible for the Communist hierarchy to treat the Communist world with morality, even if they so decide, while they are trained to treat the non-Communist world and non-Communist interests without the least moral obligations. This single factor was sufficient and powerful enough to bring about the downfall of the Communist dictatorship in the long run.

The popular cliché that 'Dictatorship corrupts and absolute dictatorship corrupts absolutely' applies perfectly to the Communist command. The immoral cannot survive without having recourse to cruelty, oppression and a blatant disregard of justice. As hatred begets hatred, so does immorality breed immorality. This state of progressive disregard of moral values at the highest level of Communist hierarchy is bound to end up in an absolutely immoral dictatorship. The absolute immoral dictatorship cannot remain confined for long within a small selective circle of their command. For their group survival, it is essential that corruption must also prevail

in all adjacent levels of decision making. Thus the and patches of immorality begin to grow bigger and wider, spreading in all planes.

However, the case of the absolute authority of a prophet of God, is vitally different from that of the mundane authorities. The prophet's authority is confined by a strict moral religious code which even he cannot violate otherwise the very edifice of his authority would crumble. It should also be noted here that the Divinely revealed moral code is always consistent and possesses the quality of making its adherents consistent in their conduct. Hence, it is the revealed truth alone which has the potential to cure man of his intrinsic ills. No man-made code of conduct based purely on human reason can work this miracle, even when aided with merciless coercion. The main difference between secular dictators and the absolute authority of a prophet, is that while secular dictators are entirely free from any obligation to a legislative code, the prophets are strictly governed by a Divine Book of moral teachings which simultaneously and equally applies to all their followers. It is this difference which sets their roles poles apart.

Any Communist regime brought to power can never be unsaddled by the revolt of the proletariat. The power they command is total and merciless. Mercy or mere moral jargon has no place in the dictionary of Marxism. Stalin was a paragon of the Marxist amoral code of conduct. Mass murders of the proletariat themselves at the altar of Marxism, during the absolute dictatorial regime of Stalin, can be pronounced as pride of performance only from the vantage point of Communist philosophy.

Alas the genius of Marx failed to identify the inherent weakness of his dialectical materialism. The hand of Communism even if it were mightier than the furies of a desert would still not have succeeded in levelling the highs and lows of the human society.

Every stormy sea is returned to calm after the turbulent elements of nature have run their course, presenting a picture of rippleless stability. So does a vast duneless desert of sand create the illusion of perfect peace and tranquillity. The Marxists' concept of stability and peace in the human society is closest to the scenario just presented. But little do the Marxists realise that such scenes of tranquillity in nature present no more than a picture of death. Where there is absolute levelling there is no interplay between the forces of nature, but what the Marxists also forget is the fact that the perfectly calm sea or a deathly still desert, do not share the human freedom of choice to cheat or to defraud and to create artificial ups and downs when there are no natural ups and downs left. Moreover, it is impossible for man to propose a

system which can remove every element of high and low from human society. Drops of water may look alike and particles of sand may also be shaped as perfect facsimiles of each other, but humans are not made like that.

In Marxist philosophy, it is the human particles which make the Communist utopia of tranquillity. If each citizen of a Communist state is provided equal economic opportunities, each is fed with the same quantity of bread, butter and meat; if all that man lives for or desires is made available to him, exactly in accordance with his requirements, then no human vice born out of greed should ever germinate. In such an economically levelled society there seems no need left for anyone to rob, steal or cheat, or to even attempt to accommodate wealth, which would not be able to buy him anything beyond the provisions made by the state. Such a society should ultimately be rid of all crimes because greed, the most powerful causative factor of crime, would seem to have been uprooted.

When this state of equal opportunities, equal needs and equal fulfilment of needs is guaranteed, provided of course, that each member of the society puts in his share of labour to his capacity, only then the Communist dream of perfect stability could possibly come true. Such a society will need no state to govern its affairs. This, in short, is the utopia of Marx's materialism.

The latest trends of political and economic developments in the world, however, have already exploded this materialist myth. But no outside decree is needed to destroy Marx's garden of Eden. The rejection of morality is in itself enough to guarantee its ultimate destruction.

There are other inherent flaws in Marx's regimentational philosophy. Apart from the fact that it provides no moral code for guiding its members to discharge their responsibilities with honesty, an emphatic denial of God and the assertion that there will be no life after death hence no accountability, emboldens the functionaries of the party to absolute indiscipline and selfishness. An utter state of selfishness ensues where no holds are barred in pursuance of one's personal desires and ambitions. One feels free to do whatever one may to satiate one's greed. The corrupt always gang up to protect their class interest. They can always find means to escape exposure and consequent punishment, by joining hands with others of the same ilk. Perhaps it is this inbred propensity towards selfish behaviour in man which led Marx to conclude that man is an immoral animal. But little did he realise then, that it would be the same propensity which would ultimately bring about the demolition of the Communist empire.

The rejection of morality is not the only hurdle which prevents the realisation of Marx's dream of a stateless society. Equal access to opportunities is not enough to achieve the goal of a stateless society, nor are the greeds confined only to the fulfilment of economic requirements. Where is the answer to the greed for capturing the source of power which runs supreme in every dictatorial system? Again, where is the scientific guarantee in the system for blocking the passage of jealousies, hatred and revenge in relation to the capturing of power? Marx's scientific philosophy does not even touch this issue.

To reach the utopia, one has to pass through the hazards of a society which knows no morals and no mercy. Long before a stage of perfect levelling of economic and political society is reached, the immorality in man would have demolished the very edifice of the Communist vision of life.

In the light of this, when we reinvestigate the problems leading to the collapse of the Communist empire, we cannot fail to identify the moral failure of its functionaries to be the main culprit. It was the corruption of the Communist world which is largely to be blamed for the downfall of the Communist empire of the U.S.S.R. Thus, the failure of the system was underwritten in the Communist charter when morality was banished from it.

On the one hand there is the revealed truth and on the other, the so-called truth reached entirely through the agency of human reason. The merits of the two philosophies are not too difficult to examine. The Divine proclamation invariably claims that justice and fair play in human affairs cannot be established without their absoluteness. Moral corruption and a code of ethics based on absolute justice cannot go hand in hand. Absolute truth is the essence of all morality, and absolute morality is the essence of all truth. Hence without the rehabilitation of absolute values in man, no dream of a heaven upon earth can be envisioned. This has always been the universal pronouncement of all ages.

Marx rose to defy this age-old philosophy founded on revelation. He rejected it outright and made the counterclaim that man stands in no need of Divine guidance – nor according to him, does any God exist. Hence it is for man to carve his own path to the ultimate realisation of his dream of heaven upon earth. Thus, he carved a path guided entirely by his own intellect, completely devoid of Divine Guidance.

Looking at the Marxist vision of a stateless society once again, another fundamental flaw which has already been hinted at comes to light. It is assumed without

foundation that if the society is economically levelled, the root cause of crime will be destroyed; hence no state power will be needed to combat crime. The greed in man, however, is certainly not limited to the area of his economic activity. Even if the objectives of Marxism are entirely achieved there is much more to the greed of man than meets the Marxist eye.

Human psyche gives birth to so many desires and ambitions that any solution proposed to solve problems without taking them into account would be inadequate. Inequalities in man are not only economic. They may belong to his physical or mental aptitudes and other faculties of head and heart. His innate desire to rule, to conquer, to govern, to dominate, to love and to be loved, are but a few areas which provide a fertile soil for the seed of greed to take root in.

Beauty is one thing that cannot be shared equally by all men and women, nor can physical fitness and health be doled out to them in equal measures. The faculties of hearing and sight, of taste and touch; the likes and dislikes, cravings and aversions, even artistic aptitudes, the taste for music and passion for art, the literary pursuits and the lack of interest in what bookworms would relish and devour, are but a few examples of variants which nature has itself produced over a long course of evolution. No proponents of scientific socialism can ever do away with them. They have to be accepted as *fait accompli*. The problem is that it is this diversity itself which is the ultimate root cause of all the corruption in human society. All social maladies are born out of them. The only valid solution to discipline such tendencies lies in the Divinely revealed moral codes, which in turn cannot work without the belief in God. Remove God and revealed truth from human affairs and there will be no peace left whatsoever.

This in-depth comparison between the Godless philosophy of Marxism and the belief in revealed truth serves to clarify the case in point. On the one hand there is man's reason alone, unaided by Divine guidance, striving to resolve all human problems by itself. On the other, there is the Divinely revealed truth which emphasises the role of absolute moral measures to combat immorality in man.

A critical review of the former leads one to the only logical conclusion, that reason by itself is totally inadequate for guiding human steps to peace and tranquillity. A study of religious history reveals that peace and tranquillity were only achieved when Divine messengers fought heroic battles against the immorality in man. It was through a course of toil, sweat and blood, that islands of a near peaceful human society were ever created in the midst of the raging ocean of crime and sin. No doubt

they were always reclaimed by the seas of temptation. But even so, the level of human morality was invariably raised a notch or two. Had it not been so, and had there been no Divinely generated movements for the moral rearmament of man, society would be a hundred times worse than it is today. There is no doubt left, therefore, in the indispensability of revelation and revealed truth.

References

1. Westfall, R.C. (1993), *The Life of Issac*, University Press, Cambridge, p.124.
2. Westfall, R.C. (1993), *The Life of Issac Newton*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p.122.
3. Westfall, R.C. (1993), *The Life of Issac Newton*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, p.121.
4. Gutman, J. (1963), *Philosophy A to Z*, Grosset & Dunlap Inc, New York.
5. Kiernan, T. (1966), *Who's Who In The History of Philosophy*, Vision Press, New York, p. 54
6. Copleston, F. (1956), *Contemporary Philosophy. Studies of Logical Positivism and Existentialism*. Burns, Oates and Washbourne Ltd., London, pp.154-15 5
7. Sartre, J. (1975), *Existentialism and Humanism*. Eyre Methuen Ltd., London, p.34
8. Lenin, V. I. (1963), *Collected Works*. Vol.38, Philosophical Notebooks. Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, p.201



Revelation, Rationality, Knowledge and Truth by Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad



‘The most distinguishing feature of this book is the profound and deep understanding of the Qur’an that you use in all your arguments whether to refute or to support. This sort of knowledge of the scriptures cannot be simply acquired by just simple studies. This is a gift from God that is granted to few and it is a gift to be called revelation.’

Hon. Tom Cox, MP (Tooting – SW London)

Subscription

Review of Religions

We hope you have enjoyed reading this edition of the magazine. *The Review of Religions* will continue to provide discussion on a wide range of subjects and welcomes any comments or suggestions from its readers.

To ensure that you regularly receive this monthly publication, please fill in your details below and we will put you on our mailing list.

The cost of one year's subscription is £15 Sterling or \$30 US for overseas readers (Please do not send cash). *Payments should be made payable to the London Mosque and sent to the address below:*

Review of Religions, The London Mosque, 16 Gressenhall Road, London SW18 5QL, United Kingdom

Please put me on the mailing list for the Review of Religions for 1 year. I enclose subscription payment of £15.00 or \$30.00 US.

Name: _____

Address: _____

